



LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ

XIX

THE KINGDOM OF GOD
IS WITHIN YOU



The Complete Works of
Lyof N. Tolstoï

The Kingdom of God is Within You
What is Art?
What is Religion?



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WITHIN YOU

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INTRODUCTION

THE present volume contains a strong appeal for practical religion. It is an arraignment of empty observances and hollow mockeries, and a plea for simple righteousness within. Count Tolstor's earnest and eloquent manner comes out forcibly in his elucidation of Christ's words which he takes for his text, — "The Kingdom of God is within you." The writer pleads that the outward forms of religion, however helpful they may be to some souls, are not essential; that the superstitions with which Faith sometimes clothes or masks herself may or may not be uplifting; but that the foundation of Christianity is the truth contained in Christ's words, his simple, plain, undogmatic commands and prohibitions.

"I believe it is Max Müller," says Tolstor, "who describes the astonishment of an Indian converted to Christianity, who, having apprehended the essence of the Christian doctrine, came to Europe and beheld the life of Christians. He could not recover from his astonishment in the presence of the reality, so different from the state of things he had expected to find among Christian nations."

Contradictions like this between teaching and living will continue to arise, he continues, until men find the essential something which they lack — the quality which will make them what they really desire to be, and what many even conscientiously believe themselves to be.

One word sums up this need, and that word is Love. If the world should take Love for its guiding star, it is evident that all the evils of mankind would cease, — wars, crimes, poverty, ambitions; the millennium would

come! How that blessed period may begin in the heart of every man is the theme of this beautiful and inspiring book.

The translation has been done with care and fidelity by Mrs. Aline Delano. The translator has also had opportunity to revise her work.

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU;

OR,

CHRISTIANITY NOT AS A MYSTICAL DOCTRINE,
BUT AS A NEW LIFE-CONCEPTION

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” —
JOHN viii. 32.

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the
soul ; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in
hell.” — MATTHEW x. 28.

“Ye are bought with a price ; be not ye the servants of men.” —
I CORINTHIANS vii. 23.

INTRODUCTORY

IN 1884 I wrote a book entitled “My Religion,” wherein
I formulated my creed.

While affirming my faith in the doctrine taught by
Christ, I could not refrain from manifesting at the same
time the reason why I look upon the ecclesiastical doc-
trine commonly called Christianity as erroneous, and to
me incredible.

Among the many deviations of the latter from the
doctrine of Christ, I called attention to the principal
one ; namely — the evasion of the commandment that
forbids man to resist evil by violence, as a striking ex-
ample of the perversion of the doctrine of Christ by
ecclesiastical interpretation.

I knew but little, no more than other men, of what had
been taught or written on the subject of non-resistance
in former times. I was familiar with the opinions of

the Fathers of the Church, Origen, Tertullian, and others; and I also knew of the existence of certain sects called Mennonites, Herrnhuters, and Quakers, all of which forbid Christians the use of arms, and will not submit to conscription, but I never knew the arguments by which these sects sought to maintain their views.

My book, as I had anticipated, was prohibited by the Russian censors, but partly in consequence of my reputation as a writer, partly because it excited curiosity, it had a circulation in manuscript, and while, on the one hand, it called forth from those persons who sympathized with my ideas, information concerning works written on the same subject, on the other, it excited criticisms on the opinions therein maintained.

These two results, together with the historical events of recent years, made many things clear to me, and led me to many new deductions and conclusions which I now desire to set forth.

I shall speak in the first place of the information I received in regard to the history of this matter of non-resistance to evil; and in the second place, of the arguments upon the subject offered by religious critics, that is, by critics who profess the religion of Christ, as well as those of secular critics, that is to say, of men who make no such profession; and finally, the conclusions which I drew from the arguments of both parties, as well as from the historical events of later years.

CHAPTER I

DOCTRINE OF NON-RESISTANCE TO EVIL FROM THE
ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY, HAS BEEN, AND STILL IS,
PROFESSED BY THE MINORITY OF MEN

Concerning the book "My Religion" — Information called forth by this book — Letters of Quakers — Professions of Garrison — Adin Ballou, his works and Catechism — "The Net of Faith" of Helchitsky — Relations of men toward works that explain the teachings of Christ — The book of Dymond "On War" — Assertion of Non-resistance by Musser — Relations of government in 1818 toward those who refuse to join the military service — General inimical attitude of governments and liberal men toward those who refused to take part in the violence of governments and their conscious effort to conceal and ignore these demonstrations of Christian Non-resistance.

AMONG the early responses called forth by my book were letters from American Quakers. In these letters, while expressing their sympathy with my ideas in regard to the unlawfulness of violence and war where Christians are concerned, the Quakers made known to me many details in relation to their sect, which for more than two hundred years has professed the doctrine of Christ in the matter of non-resistance, and which never has, nor does it now use weapons for self-defense. Together with the letters, the Quakers sent me many of their pamphlets, periodicals, and books. From these publications I learned that already, many years ago, they had demonstrated the Christian's duty of keeping the commandment of non-resistance to evil by violence, and the error of the church which countenances wars and executions.

Having shown by a succession of arguments and texts that war — the slaughter and mutilation of men — is inconsistent with a religion founded on peace and goodwill to men, the Quakers go on to assert that nothing is so conducive to the defamation of Christ's truth in the eyes of the heathen, or so successful in arresting the spread of Christianity throughout the world, as the refusal to obey this commandment, made by men who call

themselves Christians, and by the sanction thus given to war and violence. The doctrine of Christ, which has entered into the consciousness of men, not by force or by the sword, as they say, but by non-resistance to evil, by humility, meekness, and the love of peace, can only be propagated among men by the example of peace, love, and concord given by its followers.

A Christian, according to the teaching of the Lord, should be guided in his relations toward men only by the love of peace, and therefore there should be no authority having power to compel a Christian to act in a manner contrary to God's law, and contrary to his chief duty toward his fellow-men.

The requirements of the civil law, they say, may oblige men, who, to win some worldly advantages, seek to conciliate that which is irreconcilable, to violate the law of God; but for a Christian, who firmly believes that his salvation depends upon following the teaching of Christ, this law can have no meaning.

My acquaintance with the activity of the Quakers and with their publications, with Fox, Paine, and particularly with a work published by Dymond in 1827, proved to me not only that men have long since recognized the impossibility of harmonizing Christianity and war, but that this incompatibility has been proved so clearly and irrefragably, that one can only wonder how it is possible for this incongruous union of Christianity with violence — a doctrine which is still taught by the church — to remain in force.

Besides the information obtained from the Quakers, I also received from America about the same time advices on the subject from another and hitherto unknown source. The son of William Lloyd Garrison, the famous anti-slavery champion, wrote to me that, having read my book, wherein he had found ideas similar to those expressed by his father in 1838, and taking it for granted that I should be interested to know that fact, he sent me a book written by Mr. Garrison some fifty years ago, entitled "Non-resistance."

This avowal of principle took place under the follow-

ing circumstances : — In 1838, on the occasion of a meet-
of the Society for the Promotion of Peace, William Lloyd
Garrison, while discussing means for the suppression of
war, arrived at the conclusion that the establishment of
universal peace can have no solid foundation save in the
literal obedience to the commandment of non-resistance
by violence (Matthew v. 39), as understood by the Qua-
kers, with whom Garrison was on friendly terms. Hav-
ing arrived at this conclusion, he wrote, offering to the
Society the following proclamation, which at that time,
in 1838, was signed by many of its members : —

*“Declaration of Sentiments adopted by the Peace Con-
vention, held in Boston, September 18, 19, and 20,
1838 : —*

“Assembled in Convention, from various sections of
the American Union, for the promotion of Peace on earth
and Good-will among men, We, the undersigned, regard
it as due to ourselves, to the cause which we love, to the
country in which we live, and to the world, to publish a
Declaration, expressive of the principles we cherish, the
purposes we aim to accomplish, and the measures we
shall adopt to carry forward the work of peaceful, uni-
versal reformation.

“We cannot acknowledge allegiance to any human
government; neither can we oppose any such govern-
ment by a resort to physical force. We recognize but
one King and Lawgiver, one Judge and Ruler of man-
kind. We are bound by the laws of a Kingdom which
is not of this world; the subjects of which are forbidden
to fight; in which Mercy and Truth are met together,
and Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other;
which has no state lines, no national partitions, no geo-
graphical boundaries; in which there is no distinction of
rank or division of caste, or inequality of sex; the officers
of which are Peace, its exactors Righteousness, its walls
Salvation, and its gates Praise; and which is destined to
break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms. Our
country is the world, our countrymen are all mankind.

We love the land of our nativity only as we love all other lands. The interests, rights, liberties of American citizens are no more dear to us than are those of the whole human race. Hence, we can allow no appeal to patriotism to revenge any national insult or injury; the Principle of Peace, under whose stainless banner we rally, came not to destroy, but to save, even the worst of enemies. He has left us an example, that we should follow His steps. God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

“We conceive that if a nation has no right to defend itself against foreign enemies, or to punish its invaders, no individual possesses that right in his own case. The unit cannot be of greater importance than the aggregate. If one man may take life, to obtain or defend his rights, the same license must necessarily be granted to communities, states, and nations. If *he* may use a dagger or a pistol, *they* may employ cannon, bombshells, land and naval forces. The means of self-preservation must be in proportion to the magnitude of interests at stake, and the number of lives exposed to destruction. But if a rapacious and bloodthirsty soldiery, thronging these shores from abroad, with intent to commit rapine and destroy life, may not be resisted by the people or magistracy, then ought no resistance to be offered to domestic troubles of the public peace or of private security. No obligation can rest upon Americans to regard foreigners as more sacred in their persons than themselves, or to give them a monopoly of wrong-doing with impunity.

“The dogma, that all the governments of the world are approvingly ordained of God, and that the powers that be in the United States, in Russia, in Turkey, are in accordance with His will, is not less absurd than impious. It makes the impartial Author of human freedom and equality unequal and tyrannical. It cannot be affirmed that the powers that be, in any nation, are actuated by the spirit or guided by the example of Christ, in the treatment of enemies; therefore, they can-

not be agreeable to the will of God ; and therefore their overthrow, by a spiritual regeneration of their subjects, is inevitable.

“ We register our testimony not only against all wars, whether offensive or defensive, but all preparations for war ; against every naval ship, every arsenal, every fortification ; against the militia system and a standing army ; against all military chieftains and soldiers ; against all monuments commemorative of victory over a fallen foe, all trophies won in battle, all celebrations in honor of military or naval exploits ; against all appropriations for the defense of a nation by force and army, on the part of any legislative body ; against every edict of government requiring of its subjects military service. Hence we deem it unlawful to bear arms, or to hold a military office.

“ As every human government is upheld by physical strength, and its laws are enforced virtually at the point of the bayonet, we cannot hold any office which imposes upon its incumbent the obligation to compel men to do right, on pain of imprisonment or death. We therefore voluntarily exclude ourselves from every legislative and judicial body, and repudiate all human politics, worldly honors, and stations of authority. If *we* cannot occupy a seat in the legislature or on the bench, neither can we elect *others* to act as our substitutes in any such capacity.

“ It follows that we cannot sue any man at law, to compel him by force to restore anything which he may have wrongfully taken from us or others ; but if he has seized our coat, we shall surrender up our cloak, rather than subject him to punishment.

“ We believe that the penal code of the old covenant, ‘ An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,’ has been abrogated by Jesus Christ ; and that under the new covenant, the forgiveness instead of the punishment of enemies has been enjoined upon all His disciples, in all cases whatsoever. To extort money from enemies, or set them upon a pillory, or cast them into prison, or hang them upon gallows, is obviously not to

forgive, but to take retribution. 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.'

"The history of mankind is crowded with evidences proving that physical coercion is not adapted to moral regeneration; that the sinful disposition of men can be subdued only by love; that evil can be exterminated from the earth only by goodness; that it is not safe to rely upon an arm of flesh, upon man whose breath is in his nostrils, to preserve us from harm; that there is great security in being gentle, harmless, long-suffering, and abundant in mercy; that it is only the meek who shall inherit the earth, for the violent who resort to the sword are destined to perish with the sword. Hence, as a measure of sound policy — of safety to property, life, and liberty — of public quietude and private enjoyment — as well as on the ground of allegiance to Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, we cordially adopt the non-resistance principle; being confident that it provides for all possible consequences, will insure all things needful to us, is armed with omnipotent power, and must ultimately triumph over every assailing force.

"We advocate no jacobinical doctrine. The spirit of jacobinism is the spirit of retaliation, violence, and murder. It neither fears God nor regards man. We would be filled with the spirit of Jesus Christ. If we abide by our principles, it is impossible for us to be disorderly, or plot treason, or participate in any evil work; we shall submit to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; obey all the requirements of government, except such as we deem contrary to the commands of the gospel; and in no case resist the operation of law, except by meekly submitting to the penalty of disobedience.

"But while we shall adhere to the doctrine of non-resistance and passive submission, we purpose, in a moral and spiritual sense, to speak and act boldly in the cause of God; to assail iniquity in high places and in low places; to apply our principles to all existing civil, political, legal, and ecclesiastical institutions; and to hasten the time when the kingdoms of this world will

have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever.

“It appears to us a self-evident truth, that, whatever the gospel is designed to destroy at any period of the world, being contrary to it, ought now to be abandoned. If, then, the time is predicted when swords shall be beaten into plowshares, and spears into pruning-hooks, and men shall not learn the art of war any more, it follows that all who manufacture, sell, or wield those deadly weapons do thus array themselves against the peaceful dominion of the Son of God on earth.

“Having thus briefly stated our principles and purposes, we proceed to specify the measures we propose to adopt in carrying our object into effect.

“We expect to prevail through the foolishness of preaching, — striving to commend ourselves unto every man’s conscience, in the sight of God. From the press we shall promulgate our sentiments as widely as practicable. We shall endeavor to secure the coöperation of all persons, of whatever name or sect. The triumphant progress of the cause of Temperance and of Abolition in our land, through the instrumentality of benevolent and voluntary associations, encourages us to combine our own means and efforts for the promotion of a still greater cause. Hence, we shall employ lecturers, circulate tracts and publications, form societies, and petition our state and national governments, in relation to the subject of Universal Peace. It will be our leading object to devise ways and means for effecting a radical change in the views, feelings, and practices of society, respecting the sinfulness of war and the treatment of enemies.

“In entering upon the great work before us, we are not unmindful that, in its prosecution, we may be called to test our sincerity even as in a fiery ordeal. It may subject us to insult, outrage, suffering, yea, even death itself. We anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, calumny. Tumults may arise against us. The ungodly and violent, the proud and pharisaical, the ambitious and tyrannical, principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places, may contrive to

crush us. So they treated the Messiah, whose example we are humbly striving to imitate. If we suffer with Him we know that we shall reign with Him. We shall not be afraid of their terror, neither be troubled. Our confidence is in the Lord Almighty, not in man. Having withdrawn from human protection, what can sustain us but that faith which overcomes the world? We shall not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try us, as though some strange thing had happened unto us; but rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings. Wherefore, we commit the keeping of our souls to God, in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. For every one that forsakes house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for Christ's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

"Firmly relying upon the certain and universal triumph of the sentiments contained in this declaration, however formidable may be the opposition arrayed against them—in solemn testimony of our faith in their divine origin—we hereby affix our signatures to it, commending it to the reason and conscience of mankind, giving ourselves no anxiety as to what may befall us, and resolving in the strength of the Lord God calmly and meekly to abide the issue."

Later on, Garrison founded a Non-resistance Society and started a periodical entitled *The Non-resistant*, wherein the full significance and consequences of the doctrine were plainly set forth, as has been stated in the proclamation. I gained, subsequently, further information concerning the fate of this society and the periodical from a biography of William Lloyd Garrison, written by his sons.

Neither the periodical nor the society enjoyed a long life. The majority of Garrison's associates in the work of liberating the slaves, apprehensive lest the too radical views expressed in the *The Non-resistant* might alienate men from the practical business of the abolition of slavery, renounced the doctrine of non-

resistance as expressed in the declaration, and both periodical and society passed out of existence.

One would suppose that this declaration of Garrison, formulating, as it did, an important profession of faith in terms both energetic and eloquent, would have made a deeper impression on men, and have become a subject for universal consideration. On the contrary, not only is it unknown in Europe, but even among those Americans who honor the memory of Garrison there are but few who are familiar with this.

A similar fate befell another American champion of the same doctrine, Adin Ballou, who died recently, and who for fifty years had preached in favor of non-resistance to evil. How little is known in regard to the question of non-resistance may be gathered from the fact that the younger Garrison (who has written an excellent biography of his father in four large volumes), in answer to my inquiry whether any society for the defense of the principles of non-resistance was yet alive and possessed adherents, wrote me that, so far as he knew, the society had dissolved and its members were no longer interested, while at this very time Adin Ballou, who had shared Garrison's labors, and who had devoted fifty years of his life to the teaching of the doctrine of non-resistance, both by pen and by tongue, was still living in Hopedale, Massachusetts. Afterward I received a letter from Wilson, a disciple and co-worker of Ballou, and subsequently I entered into correspondence with Ballou himself. I wrote to him, and he sent me his works, from one of which I made the following extract:—"Jesus Christ is my Lord and Master," says Ballou in one of his articles, written to show the inconsistency of Christians who believe in the right of defensive and offensive warfare. "I have covenanted to forsake all and follow Him, through good and evil report, until death. But I am nevertheless a Democratic Republican citizen of the United States, implicitly sworn to bear true allegiance to my country, and to support its Constitution, if need be, with my life. Jesus Christ requires me to do unto

others as I would that others should do unto me. The Constitution of the United States requires me to do unto twenty-seven hundred thousand slaves" (they had slaves then; now they could easily be replaced by workmen) "the very contrary of what I would have them do unto me—viz., assist to keep in a grievous bondage. But I am quite easy. I vote on. I help govern on. I am willing to hold any office I may be elected to under the Constitution. And I am still a Christian. I profess on. I find difficulty in keeping covenant both with Christ and the Constitution.

"Jesus Christ forbids me to resist evil-doers by taking 'eye for eye, tooth for tooth, blood and life for life.' My government requires the very reverse, and depends, for its own self-preservation, on the halter, the musket, and the sword, seasonably employed against its domestic and foreign enemies.

"In the maintenance and use of this expensive life-destroying apparatus we can exemplify the virtues *of forgiving our injuries, loving our enemies, blessing them that curse us, and doing good to those that hate us.* For this reason we have regular Christian chaplains to pray for us and call down the smiles of God on our holy murders.

"I see it all" (that is, the contradiction between profession and life), "and yet I insist that I am as good a Christian as ever. I fellowship all; I vote on; I help govern on; I profess on; *and I glory in being at once a devoted Christian and a no less devoted adherent to the existing government.* I will not give in to those miserable non-resistant notions. I will not throw away my political influence, and leave unprincipled men to carry on government alone.

"The Constitution says — 'Congress shall have power to declare war, grant letters of marque and reprisal,' and I agree to this, I indorse it. I swear to help carry it through. I vote for men to hold office who are sworn to support all this. What, then, am I less a Christian? Is not war a Christian service? Is it not perfectly

Christian to murder hundreds of thousands of fellow human beings; to ravish defenseless females, sack and burn cities, and enact all the other cruelties of war? Out upon these new-fangled scruples! This is the very way to forgive injuries, and love our enemies! If we only do it all in true love nothing can be more Christian than wholesale murder!"

In another pamphlet, entitled "How many does it take?" he says — "One man must not kill. If he does, it is murder; two, ten, one hundred men, acting on their responsibility, must not kill. If they do, it is still murder. But a state or nation may kill as many as they please, and it is no murder. It is just, necessary, commendable, and right. Only get people enough to agree to it, and the butchery of myriads of human beings is perfectly innocent. But how many does it take? This is the question. Just so with theft, robbery, burglary, and all other crimes. Man-stealing is a great crime in one man, or a very few men only. But a whole nation can commit it, and the act becomes not only innocent, but highly honorable."

The following is, in substance, a catechism of Ballou, compiled for the use of his congregation: —

THE CATECHISM OF NON-RESISTANCE.¹

Q. Whence comes the word non-resistance?

A. From the utterance: "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil." — Matthew v. 39.

Q. What does this word denote?

A. It denotes a lofty Christian virtue, commanded by Christ.

Q. Are we to understand the word non-resistance in its broad sense, that is, as meaning that one should offer no resistance to evil whatsoever?

A. No; it should be understood literally as Christ taught it — that is, not to return evil for evil. Evil

¹ From the Russian version, which Count Tolstoi calls a free translation made with some omissions. After diligent search and inquiry I have been unable to find this catechism among Ballou's works. — TR.

should be resisted by all lawful means, but not by evil.

Q. From what does it appear that Christ gave that meaning to non-resistance?

A. From the words which he used on that occasion. He said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also."

Q. Whom did he mean by the words: "Ye have heard that it hath been said"?

A. The patriarchs and the prophets, and that which they spoke and which is contained in the Old Testament, that the Jews generally call the Law and Prophets.

Q. To what laws did Christ allude in the words: "Ye have heard"?

A. To those in which Noah, Moses, and other prophets grant the use of personal violence against those who commit it, for the purpose of punishing and destroying evil deeds.

Q. Mention such commandments.

A. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." — Genesis ix. 6.

"He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." — Exodus xxi. 12, 23, 24, 25.

"And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death. And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbor; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth." — Leviticus xxiv. 17, 19, 20.

"And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother. And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life,

eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”
— Deuteronomy xix. 18, 19, 21.

These are the injunctions of which Jesus speaks.

Noah, Moses, and the prophets taught that he who murders, mutilates, or tortures his neighbor doeth evil. In order to combat and destroy this evil, the evil-doer must be chastised by death, mutilation, or some personal torture. Transgressions are to be avenged by transgressions, murder by murder, torture by torture, evil by evil. Thus taught Noah, Moses, and the prophets. But Christ forbids all this. The gospel says: “I say unto you, resist ye not evil, avenge not one transgression by another, but rather bear a repetition of the offense from the evil-doer.” That which has been allowed is now forbidden. Having understood what resistance we have been taught, we know exactly what Christ meant by non-resistance.

Q. Did the teaching of the Ancients admit of resisting transgression by transgression?

A. Yes; but Christ forbade it. A Christian has no right in any case to take the life of, or to offend against, the evil-doer.

Q. May he not kill or wound another in self-defense?

A. No.

Q. May he enter a complaint to the magistrates for the purpose of chastising the offender?

A. No. For that which he does through others, he practically does himself.

Q. May he fight in the army against foreign or domestic enemies?

A. Certainly not. He can take no part in war, or in the preparation therefor. He cannot make use of weapons. He cannot resist one transgression by another, whether he is alone or in company, either personally or through other agents.

Q. May he voluntarily select or drill soldiers for the government?

A. He cannot do this, if he wishes to be *faithful* to the law of Christ.

Q. May he voluntarily contribute money to assist a

government which is supported by military power, executions, and violence in general?

A. No; unless the money is to be used for some special purpose, justifiable in itself, where the object and the means employed are good.

Q. May he pay taxes to such a government?

A. No; he should not pay taxes on his own accord, but he should not resist the levying of a tax. A tax imposed by the government is levied independently of the will of the citizens. It may not be resisted without recourse to violence, and a Christian should not use violence; therefore he must deliver his property to the forced damage caused by authorities.

Q. May a Christian vote at elections and take part in courts of law or in the government?

A. No. To take a part in elections, courts of law, or in the administration of government is the same thing as a participation in the violence of the government.

Q. What is the chief significance of the doctrine of non-resistance?

A. To show that it is possible to extirpate evil from one's own heart, as well as from that of one's neighbor. This doctrine forbids men to do that which perpetuates and multiplies evil in this world. He who attacks another, and does him an injury, excites a feeling of hatred, the worst of all evil. To offend our neighbor because he has offended us, with ostensible motive of self-defense, means but to repeat the evil act against him as well as against ourselves, — it means to beget, or at least to let loose, or to encourage the Evil Spirit whom we wish to expel. Satan cannot be driven out by Satan, falsehood cannot be purged by falsehood, nor can evil be conquered by evil. True non-resistance is the only real method of resisting evil. It crushes the serpent's head. It destroys and exterminates all evil feeling.

Q. But admitting that the idea of the doctrine is correct, is it practicable?

A. As practicable as any virtue commanded by the law of God. Good deeds cannot be performed under all circumstances without self-sacrifice, privations, suffering,

and, in extreme cases, without the loss of life itself. But he who prizes life more than the fulfilment of God's will is already dead to the only true life. Such a man, in trying to save his life, will lose it. Furthermore, wherever non-resistance costs the sacrifice of one's life, or of some essential advantage of life, resistance costs thousands of such sacrifices.

Non-resistance preserves ; resistance destroys.

It is much safer to act justly than unjustly ; to endure an offense rather than resist it by violence ; safer even in regard to the present life. If all men refused to resist evil, the world would be a happy one.

Q. But if only a few were to act thus, what would become of them ?

A. Even if but one man were to act thus, and the others should agree to crucify him, would it not be more glorious for him to die in the glory of non-resisting love, praying for his enemies, than live wearing the crown of Cæsar, besprinkled with the blood of the murdered ? But whether it be one man or thousands of men who are firmly determined not to resist evil by evil, still, whether in the midst of civilized or uncivilized neighbors, men who do not rely on violence are safer than those who do. A robber, a murderer, a villain, will be less likely to harm them if he finds them offering no armed resistance. "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," and he who seeks peace, who acts like a friend, who is inoffensive, who forgives and forgets injuries, generally enjoys peace, or if he dies, he dies a blessed death.

Hence, if all were to follow the commandment of non-resistance, there would manifestly be neither offense nor evil-doing. If even the majority were composed of such men they would establish the rule of love and good-will even toward the offenders, by not resisting evil by evil nor using violence. Even if such men formed a numerous minority, they would have such an improving moral influence over society that every severe punishment would be revoked, and violence and enmity would be replaced by peace and good-will. If they

formed but a small minority, they would rarely experience anything worse than the contempt of the world, while the world, without preserving it or feeling grateful therefor, would become better and wiser from its latent influence. And if, in the most extreme cases, certain members of the minority might be persecuted unto death, these men, thus dying for the truth, would have left their doctrine already sanctified by the blood of martyrdom.

Peace be with all ye who seek peace ; and may the all-conquering love be the imperishable inheritance of every soul who submits of its own accord to the law of Christ.

Resist not evil by violence. — ADIN BALLOU.

For fifty years Ballou wrote and published books chiefly on the subject of non-resistance. In these writings, remarkable for their eloquence and simplicity of style, the question is considered in all its aspects. He proved it to be the duty of every Christian who professes to believe that the Bible is a revelation from God, to obey this commandment. He enumerates the arguments against the commandment of non-resistance, drawn from the Old as well as the New Testament, the expulsion from the Temple, among others, and answers each one in turn. Setting the Bible aside, he points out the practical good sense on which this principle is founded, sums up the arguments against it, and refutes them. For instance, in one chapter of his work he treats of non-resistance to evil in exceptional cases, and affirms that granting the truth of the supposition that there are cases to which the rule of non-resistance cannot be applied, that would prove that the rule in general is inconsistent. Citing such exceptional cases, he proves that these are the very occasions when the application of this rule is both wise and necessary. The question has been viewed from every side, and no argument, whether of opponent or sympathizer, has been neglected or left unanswered. I mention this in order to call attention to the deep interest which works of this class ought to excite in men who profess Christianity ; and

it would seem therefore that Ballou's zeal should have been recognized, and the ideas he expressed either accepted or disproved. But such was not the case.

The life-work of Garrison, the father, his founding the society of the Non-resistant, and his declaration, convinced me, more even than my intercourse with the Quakers, that the divergence of the Christianity of the State from Christ's law of non-resistance by violence has been long since noticed and pointed out, and men have labored and still do labor to counteract it. Thus Ballou's earnestness has fortified my opinion. But the fate of Garrison, and particularly that of Ballou, almost unknown, notwithstanding fifty years of active and persistent work in one direction, has confirmed me in the belief that there exists a certain inexpressed but fixed determination to oppose all such attempts by a wall of silence.

In August of 1890 Ballou died, and his obituary appeared in the *American Religio-Philosophical Journal* of August 23d.

From this obituary we learn that Ballou was the spiritual leader of a community, that he had preached from 8000 to 9000 sermons, married 1000 couples, and written 500 articles, but in regard to the object of his life's devotion not a word is said; the word "non-resistance" is never mentioned.

All the exhortations of the Quakers for 200 years, all the efforts of Garrison, the father, the foundation of his society, his periodical, and his declarations, as well as the life-work of Ballou, are the same as if they had never existed.

Another striking example of the obscurity into which a work written for the purpose of explaining the principle of non-resistance, and to denounce those who refuse to recognize this commandment, may fall, is the fate of a book by the Czech Helchitsky, which has only recently been discovered, and which up to the present time has never been printed.

Shortly after the publication of my book in German, I received a letter from a professor of the Prague Uni-

versity, who wrote to tell me of a book which had never been printed, a work written in the fifteenth century by the Czech Helchitsky, and entitled "The Net of Faith." In this work, written four centuries ago, Helchitsky, as the professor tells me, has expressed exactly the same opinion in regard to true and false Christianity that I did in my work entitled "My Religion." The professor wrote that the work of Helchitsky was to appear in print for the first time in the Czech language in one of the publications of the St. Petersburg Academy of Science. As I was unable to obtain the book, I endeavored to ascertain all that was known of Helchitsky himself, and this knowledge I gained from a German book sent to me by the same professor in Prague. Besides that I learned something from Pipin's "History of Czech Literature." Pipin says:—

"'The Net of Faith' is the doctrine of Christ, where-with man is to be raised from the gloomy depths of the social sea of iniquity. True faith is to believe the words of God; but we are living in times when men call the true faith heresy; hence it is upon our own reason that we must rely to discover the truth if we possess it not. Darkness has concealed it from men, and they no longer recognize the true law of Christ.

"As an illustration of the law, Helchitsky cites the original social organization of Christian society, which is considered by the Church of Rome of the present time as rank heresy.

"This primitive church was his own ideal of a social order founded upon equality, liberty, and fraternity. Christianity, according to Helchitsky, still preserves this foundation, and has but to return to its pure teaching to render any other social order, whose existence requires the authority of pope or king, quite superfluous. The law of love will suffice for all.

"Historically, Helchitsky assigns the decadence of Christianity to the time of Constantine the Great, whom the Pope Silvester received into the Church in spite of his pagan life and morals. Constantine, in return, rewarded the Pope by endowing him with riches and tem-

poral power. Since then these two forces have played into each other's hands, seeking only outward glory. Doctors, men of learning, and the clergy, caring only to maintain their influence over the world, excited the nations one against the other, encouraging the crimes of murder and rapine, and thus destroying Christianity, both in faith and practice. Helchitsky totally denies the right of man to wage war or to exact the penalty of death. According to him, every soldier, even if he be a 'knight,' is only a transgressor, a criminal, and a murderer."

All this, with the addition of some biographical details and extracts from the correspondence of Helchitsky, is related in the German book.

Having thus become acquainted with the essence of Helchitsky's teachings, I waited with still greater impatience the appearance of "The Net of Faith" in the Academy's periodical. But one, two, three years passed, and the book was not forthcoming. It was only in 1888 that I learned that the printing had been suspended. I obtained the proof-sheets of what had been printed, and read them. In many respects it was a wonderful book.

Its contents have been accurately summarized by Pipin. Helchitsky's principal idea is that Christianity, in league with sovereignty during the reign of Constantine the Great, and continuing to develop under these conditions, became corrupted, and ceased to be Christianity. He called his book "The Net of Faith" because he had chosen for his motto that verse from the New Testament which speaks of the disciples as fishers of men. He carries on the simile thus: "Through His disciples, Christ caught the world in the net of His faith, but the larger fishes, breaking the net, escaped; then others followed through these same holes made by the large fishes, and the net was left almost empty." By the big fish he means the popes, emperors, and sovereigns who, without giving up their authority, accepted Christianity, not in its reality, but in its semblance.

Helchitsky teaches the same doctrine that is now

taught by the non-resistant Mennonites and Quakers, and in former times by the Bogomiles, the Paulicians, and other sects. He teaches that Christianity, requiring, as it does from its followers, humility, gentleness, a forgiving spirit, the turning of the other cheek when one is struck, and the love of one's enemies, is not compatible with that violence which is an essential element of authority. A Christian, according to Helchitsky, should not only refuse to be a commander or a soldier, but he should take no part in government, neither should he become a tradesman, nor even a landowner. He might be an artisan or a farmer. This book is among the few which have been saved from the flame into which books denouncing official Christianity were commonly cast. As all such so-called heretical works were usually burned with their authors, very few of those which denounce official Christianity have been preserved — and for this reason the book of which we speak has a special interest.

But apart from its interest, concerning which there may be differences of opinion, it is one of the most remarkable results of human thought, both on account of its profundity and the wonderful power and beauty of its language, not to mention its antiquity. And yet this book has remained unprinted for centuries, and continues to be unknown except to a few specialists. (*See Note, end of Chapter.*)

One would think that works like these of the Quakers, of Garrison, of Ballou, and of Helchitsky, — which affirm and prove by the authority of the Bible that the world misinterprets the teaching of Christ, — would arouse an interest, would make a sensation, would give rise to discussions between the clergy and their flocks.

One might suppose that works which deal with the very essence of the Christian doctrine would be reviewed, and either acknowledged to be just, or else refuted and condemned.

Not at all. Every one of these works suffers the same fate. Men of widely differing opinions, believers, and, what is still more surprising, unbelieving liberals, as

though by common consent, preserve an obstinate silence in regard to them. Thus every attempt to explain the true meaning of Christ's doctrine goes for nothing.

And more astonishing still is the ignorance concerning two works whose existence was made known to me after the publication of my own book. One is a work by Dymond, "On War," printed for the first time in London in 1824, and the other by Daniel Musser, entitled "Non-resistance Asserted," was written in 1864.

The ignorance in regard to these books is amazing; the more so, that apart from their merit, both treat, not so much of the theory as of its practical application to life; of the relations of Christianity to military service, which is particularly interesting in view of the system of conscription. It may be asked, perhaps, what action is befitting for a subject who believes that war is incompatible with religion when his government calls upon him for military service?

One would take this to be a vital question, whose answer, in view of our present system of conscription, becomes one of serious importance. All men, or the majority of mankind, are Christians, and every male is required to do military duty. How man, in his Christian character, is to meet this demand, Dymond gives the following reply:—

"It is his duty, mildly and temperately, yet firmly, to refuse to serve."

"There are some persons who, without any determinate process of reasoning, appear to conclude that responsibility for national measures attaches solely to those who direct them; that it is the business of governments to consider what is good for the community, and that, in these cases, the duty of the subject is merged in the will of the sovereign. Considerations like these are, I believe, often voluntarily permitted to become opiates of the conscience. I have no part, it is said, in the councils of the government, and am not, therefore, responsible for its crimes. We are, indeed, not responsible for the crimes of our rulers, but we are responsible for our own; and the crimes of our rulers are our own,

if, whilst we believe them to be crimes, we promote them by our coöperation.

“Those who suppose that obedience in all things is required, or that responsibility in political affairs is transferred from the subject to the sovereign, reduce themselves to a great dilemma. It is to say that we must resign our conduct and our consciences to the will of others, and act wickedly, or well, as their good or evil may preponderate, without merit for virtue or responsibility for crime.”

It is worthy of notice that the same is expressed in a maxim to soldiers, which they are required to memorize. Dymond says that only a commander answers for the consequences of his order. But this is unjust. A man cannot remove the responsibility for his actions from himself. And this is evident from the following: “If your superior orders you to kill your child, your neighbor, your father, or your mother, will you obey? If you will not, there is an end of the argument; for if you may reject his authority in one instance, where is the limit to rejection? There is no rational limit but that which is assigned by Christianity, and that is both rational and practicable.

“We think, then, that it is the business of every man who believes that war is inconsistent with our religion, respectfully, but steadfastly, to refuse to engage in it. Let such as these remember that an honorable and an awful duty is laid upon them. It is upon their fidelity, so far as human agency is concerned, that the cause of peace is suspended. Let them, then, be willing to avow their opinions and to defend them. Neither let them be contented with words, if more than words, if suffering also, is required. It is only by the unyielding fidelity of virtue that corruption can be extirpated. If you believe that Jesus Christ has prohibited slaughter, let not the opinions or the commands of a world induce you to join in it. By this ‘steady and determinate pursuit of virtue,’ the benediction which attaches to those who hear the sayings of God, and do them, will rest upon you, and the time will come when even the world will honor

you as contributors to the work of human reformation."

Musser's work, entitled "Non-resistance Asserted; or, Kingdom of Christ and Kingdom of this World Separated," was published in 1864.

This book deals with the same question, drawing its illustrations from the drafting of the United States citizens during the time of the Civil War. In setting forth the reasons why men should have the right to decline military service, his arguments are no less applicable to the present time. In his Introduction the author says: "It is well known that there are great numbers of people in the United States who profess to be conscientiously opposed to war. They are mostly called non-resistants, or defenseless Christians, and refuse to defend their country, or take up arms at the call of the government and go forth to battle against its enemies. Hitherto this conscientious scruple has been respected by the government in this country; and those claiming it have been relieved or excused from this service.

"Since the commencement of the present civil war in the United States the public mind has been unusually agitated on this subject. It is not unreasonable that such persons as feel it to be their duty to go forth and endure the hardships of camp life, and imperil health, life, and limb in defense of their country and government, should feel some jealousy of those who have, with themselves, long enjoyed the protection and benefits of the government, and yet, in the hour of its need, refuse to share the burden of its defense and protection. Neither is it strange that such a position should be looked upon as most unreasonable and monstrous, and those who hold it be regarded with some suspicion. Many able speakers and writers," says the author, "have raised their voices and pens to refute the idea of non-resistance, as both unreasonable and unscriptural. This is not to be wondered at, seeing that those who profess the principle and do not possess it, or correctly understand it, act inconsistently, and thereby bring the profession into disrepute and contempt. However much

misapplication or abuse of a principle may prejudice the minds of those who are unacquainted with a subject, it is yet no argument against its truth."

The author at first proves it to be the duty of each Christian to obey the rule of non-resistance. He says that the rule is perfectly explicit, and that it has been given by Christ to all Christianity without any possibility of being misinterpreted. "Judge for yourselves, whether it is right or wrong to obey man more than you do the Lord," said both Peter and John; and in exactly the same way every man who wishes to be a Christian should regard the requirement of his nation to be a soldier, remembering that Christ has told him, "Do not resist evil."

This, in the opinion of Musser, decides the question of principle. Another point, as to the right of declining military duty while one enjoys the advantages accruing through violence, the author considers in detail, and arrives at the conclusion that should a Christian who follows the teaching of Christ refuse to go to the war, he must also decline to take any position under the government or any part in the elections, neither must he have recourse to any officer of the law for his own personal advantage. Our author goes on to consider the relation between the Old and New Testaments, and the significance of government for non-Christians; arguments against the doctrine of non-resistance are enumerated and refuted. The author closes his book with the following words:—"Christians need no governments: for they ought not to obey it in those matters wherein Christ's teaching is set at naught, and still less should they take an active part in it. Christ has chosen His disciples out of the world. They have no promise of temporal good or happiness, but the contrary. Their promise is in the world to come. The spirit which they possess renders them happy and contented in any sphere of life. So long as the world tolerates them, they are contented; but if it will not let them dwell in peace, they flee to another city or place; and so they are true pilgrims and strangers on earth,

having no certain abiding place. They are well contented that the dead may bury their dead, if they are only permitted to follow Christ."

Without deciding upon the merits of this definition of a Christian's duty in regard to war, which we find set down in these two works, we cannot fail to see the urgent need for a decision in regard to the question itself.

There are men — hundreds of thousands of Quakers, Mennonites, our own Duhobortzi, Molokani, men who belong to no sect whatsoever — who believe that violence and therefore military service is incompatible with Christianity; every year, for instance, we see in Russia a number of men refusing to obey the conscription because of their religious opinions. And how does the government deal with them? Does it release them? Oh, no! Does it use force, and in case of disobedience punish them? Not exactly. In 1818, government managed the affair in this wise.

The following is an extract, hardly known to any one in Russia, from a letter of Muraviev-Karsky, which was prohibited by the Russian censor: —

"TIFLIS, *October 2d*, 1818.

"This morning the commander of the fortress told me that five peasants belonging to the landowners of the government of Tambov had been recently sent into the province of Grusia. These men were intended to serve as soldiers, but they refused to obey. They were flogged several times and made to run the gantlet, but they were ready to give themselves up to the most cruel tortures, yea, even to death itself, to escape military service. 'Let us go our way and harm us not; we do no harm ourselves. All men are equal. The sovereign is a man like one of us, why should we pay him taxes, and wherefore should we risk our lives to kill in battle those who have never done us any harm? Draw and quarter us, if you will, and we shall never change our minds; we will never wear the uniform, nor mess at the soldier's table. Some pitying soul may give us alms

but from the government we neither have had nor will have anything whatsoever.' Such are the words of these peasants, who assure us that there are many men in Russia like themselves. Four times they were brought before the Committee of Ministers, and it was finally decided that a report be made to the Czar, who ordered them to be sent to Grusia for discipline, and desired the Commander-in-Chief to forward a monthly report of the progress made in bringing these peasants to a proper frame of mind."

The final result of this discipline is not known, for the matter was kept a profound secret, and the episode may never have been made public.

This was the conduct of the government seventy-five years ago in the greater number of cases, always carefully hiding the truth from the people; and it pursues the same policy at the present day, except in regard to the German Mennonites, who live in the government of Kherson, and who in lieu of military duty serve a corresponding term as foresters, — the justice of their refusal to obey the conscription being recognized.

But they are the sole exception; all others who, from religious scruples, refuse to perform military duty are treated in the manner just described.

At first the government employs all the methods of coercion now in use to discipline and *convert* the rebels, while at the same time the most profound secrecy envelops all these proceedings. I know of a process which was begun in 1884 against a man who had declined to serve, — a long-drawn-out trial which was guarded by the Ministry as a great secret.

The first step is usually to send the accused to the priests, and, be it said to their shame, they always try to win over the insubordinate. But as the influence exercised in the name of Christ is generally unsuccessful, the delinquent is sent from the clergy to the gendarmes, who, finding in him no political offense, send him back; whereupon he is despatched to the scientists, the doctors, and thence into the insane hospital. While he is thus sent to and fro, the delinquent, deprived of

his liberty like a condemned convict, is made to endure every kind of indignity and suffering. Four such cases have come to my knowledge. The doctors generally release the man from the insane hospital, and then every underhanded and crafty device is employed to delay the accused, because his release might encourage others to follow his example. He is not allowed to remain among the soldiers lest they discover from him that conscription is not, as they are taught to believe, in accordance with the law of God, but opposed to it. The most satisfactory arrangement for a government would be either to execute the delinquent, or beat him with rods until he died, as was done in former times. But it is awkward to condemn a man to public execution because he is true to the doctrine which we all profess to believe. Nor is it possible to take no notice of a man when he refuses to obey. So the government either tortures the man in order to compel him to deny Christ, or tries to rid itself of him by some means which will hide both the man and the crime from the eyes of the world, rather than resort to public execution. All sorts of cunning manœuvres and tricks are employed to torment the man. He is either banished to some remote province, or exasperated to disobedience and then imprisoned, or sent to the reform battalion, where he may be subjected to torture without publicity or restriction; or he is pronounced insane and locked up in the insane asylum. For instance, one was exiled to Tashkent; that is to say, a pretense was made of transferring him thither. Another was sent to Omsk, a third was court-martialed for disobedience and imprisoned, and a fourth was put into a house for the insane. The same thing is repeated on every side. Not only the government, but the majority of liberal free-thinkers, as though by preconcerted agreement, carefully avoid alluding to what has been said, written, or done in this matter of denouncing the inconsistency of violence, as embodied in its most shocking, crude, and striking form, in the person of a soldier, — this readiness to commit murder, — not only with the precepts of Christianity, but with the

dictates of mere humanity, which the world professes to obey.

Hence all the information that I have gathered concerning what has been accomplished, and what is still going on in this work of explaining the doctrine of Christ and the light in which it is regarded by the ruling powers of Europe and America, has confirmed me in the conviction that a spirit inimical to true Christianity dwells in these authorities, exhibited chiefly by the conspiracy of silence with which they enshroud any manifestation of it.

NOTE

"The publication of this book ('The Net of Faith') was ended [completed] by the Academy in the last months of the present year (1893)." — *Note received by the Publisher from Count Tolstoi while this work was going to press.*

CHAPTER II

OPINIONS OF BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS IN REGARD TO NON-RESISTANCE

The fate of the book, "My Religion" — The evasive answers of religious critics to the questions propounded in that book — 1st answer, Violence does not contradict Christianity — 2d answer, Necessity of violence for the purpose of repressing evil-doers — 3d answer, Necessity of violence for the defense of one's neighbor — 4th answer, The violation of the commandment of Non-resistance regarded as a weakness — 5th answer, Evasion of the answer by a pretense that this matter has long since been decided — The cloak of church authority, antiquity, the holiness of religious men, explain for many the contradictions between violence and Christianity, in theory as well as in life — Usual attitude of the clergy and authorities in regard to the profession of true Christianity — General character of Russian secular writers — Foreign secular critics — Incorrectness of the opinions of the former and the latter caused by a failure to understand the true meaning of the doctrine of Christ.

ALL the criticisms of the statements contained in my own book have given me a similar impression of a wish to ignore the subject.

As I had anticipated, no sooner was the book published than it was prohibited, and should, according to



COUNT L. N. TOLSTOÏ, 1892.

law, have been burned. But instead of being consumed by the flames, every copy was taken by the government officials and circulated in large numbers, both in manuscript and in the lithographed sheets, as well as in translations which were published abroad. It was not long before criticisms began to appear, not only from the clergy, but from the secular world, which the government, so far from forbidding, took pains to encourage. Hence the very refutation of the book, the existence of which they assumed to be unknown, was made the theme of theological controversy.

These criticisms, both foreign and domestic, may be divided into two classes, religious and secular; the former by persons who consider themselves believers, and the latter by free-thinkers. I shall begin by considering the former. In my book I accuse the clergy of inculcating doctrines contrary to the commandments of Christ, plainly and clearly expressed in the Sermon on the Mount, and particularly in regard to the commandment of non-resistance to evil, thereby depriving the doctrine of Christ of all its significance. Do the ministers of the gospel believe the Sermon on the Mount, including the commandment of non-resistance, to be of divine origin? Having felt themselves obliged to review my book, it would seem as if they must first of all answer the principal charge, and declare at once whether they do or do not consider the Sermon on the Mount and the commandment of non-resistance obligatory upon a Christian. Instead of making the usual reply, couched in words such as, "Though one cannot deny, neither can one affirm, the more so as," etc., let them give a categorical answer to my question: Did Christ practically require his disciples to do that which he taught in the Sermon on the Mount, and therefore may a Christian appeal to a legal tribunal, either for defense or prosecution, and still remain a Christian? May he consistently take a part in a government which is the instrument of violence? And that most important question, which, since the introduction of the general conscription, concerns us all: May a Christian remain a Christian and

still disobey the direct command of Christ; may he promise to conduct himself in a manner directly opposed to the doctrine of Christ, by entering into military service and putting himself in training to be a murderer?

The questions are put plainly and directly, and would seem to call for plain and direct answers. But no; my book has been received just as all previous denunciations have been, those denunciations of the clergy who have deviated from the law of Christ, with which history abounds since the time of Constantine the Great. Many words have been expended in noting the errors of my interpretation of this or that passage of the Scriptures, of how wrong I am in referring to the Trinity, the Redemption, and the Immortality of the soul, but never a word of that vital question: How are we to reconcile those lessons of forgiveness, humility, patience, and love toward all mankind, our neighbors as well as our enemies, taught us by the Teacher, which dwell in the heart of each of us, with the necessities caused by military aggressions against our own countrymen as well as against foreigners? All that deserves the name of a response to these questions may be summed up under five headings. I have endeavored to bring together in this book not only the criticisms upon my book, but everything that has ever been written on this subject.

The first criticisms with which I deal come mostly from men of high position, either in Church or State, who feel quite sure that no one will venture to combat their assertions; should any one make the attempt, they would never hear the arguments. These men, intoxicated for the most part by their authority, have forgotten that there is a Christianity in whose name they hold their places. They condemn as sectarian all that which is truly Christ-like in Christianity, while on the other hand, every text in both Old and New Testaments which can be wrested from its meaning so as to justify an anti-Christian or pagan sentiment — upon these they establish the foundation of Christianity. In order to confirm their statement that Christianity is not opposed to violence, these men generally quote, with the greatest

assurance, equivocal passages from the Old and New Testaments, interpreting them in the most anti-Christian spirit—the death of Ananias and Sapphira, the execution of Simon the Sorcerer, etc. All of Christ's words that can possibly be misinterpreted are quoted in vindication of cruelty—the expulsion from the Temple, the words "... it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city" (Luke x. 12), and other passages. According to these men, a Christian is not at all obliged to be guided by the spirit of humility, forgiveness, and love of his enemies. It is useless to try to refute such a doctrine, because men who affirm it refute themselves, or rather they turn away from Christ Himself, to invent an ideal and a form of religion all their own, forgetful of Him in whose name both the Church and the offices they hold exist. If men but knew that the Church preaches an unforgiving, murder-loving, and belligerent Christ, they would not believe in that Church, and its doctrines would be defended by none.

The second method, somewhat more awkward, consists in affirming that though Christ did, in point of fact, teach us to turn the other cheek, and to share our cloak, and that these are indeed lofty moral laws, still the world abounds in evil-doers, and if these wretches are not subdued by force, the righteous will perish and the world will be destroyed. I met with this argument for the first time in St. John Chrysostom, and have called attention to its unfairness in my book entitled "My Religion."

This argument is groundless, because if we allow ourselves to look upon our fellow-men as evil-doers, outcasts (Raka), we sap the very foundations of the Christian doctrine, which teaches us that we, the children of the Heavenly Father, are brothers, and equal one to the other. In the second place, if the same Father had permitted us to use violence toward wrong-doers, as there is no infallible rule for distinguishing the good from the evil, every individual or every community might class its neighbors under the head of evil-doers, which is practically the case at the present time. In

the third place, if it were possible to distinguish the righteous from the unrighteous, even then it would not be expedient in a Christian community to put to death, to cripple, or to imprison the evil-doers, as in such a community there would be no one to execute these sentences, since every man in his quality of Christian is forbidden to do violence to a malefactor.

The third mode of reply, more ingenious than the preceding ones, consists in affirming that while to obey the commandment of non-resistance is every Christian's duty, when the injury is a personal one, it ceases to be obligatory when harm is done to one's neighbor, and that in such an emergency a Christian is bound to break the commandment and use force against the evil-doer. This assertion is purely arbitrary, and one finds no justification for it throughout the whole body of the doctrine of Christ.

Such an interpretation is not only a narrow one, but actually amounts to a direct negation. If every man has the right to employ violence whenever his neighbor is threatened with danger, then the question becomes reduced to this: How may one define what is called danger to one's neighbor? If, however, my private judgment is to be arbiter in this matter, then any violence which I might commit on any occasion whatever could be excused by the declaration that my neighbor was in danger. Magicians have been burned, aristocrats and Girondists put to death, because the men in power considered them dangerous.

If this important condition, which destroys the significance of the commandment, ever entered into the thought of Christ, it would have been formulated somewhere. Not only is no such exception to the commandment to be found throughout the Teacher's life and lessons, but there is on the other hand a warning against an interpretation so false and misleading.

The error and the impracticability of such a definition is vividly illustrated in the Bible story of Caiaphas, who made use of this very same interpretation. He admitted that it was not well to put to death the innocent Jesus,

but at the same time he perceived the existence of a danger, not for himself, but for all the people, and therefore declared it better for one man to die, rather than that a whole nation should perish.

And we have a still more explicit proof of the fallacy of this interpretation in the words addressed to Peter, when he tried to revenge by violence the attack upon Jesus (Matthew xxvi. 51). Peter was defending not himself, but his beloved and divine Master, and Christ distinctly forbade him, saying, "For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew xxvi. 52). One can never justify an act of violence against one's fellow-man by claiming to have done it in defense of another who was enduring some wrong, because in committing an act of violence, it is impossible to compare the one wrong with the other, and to say which is the greater, that which one is about to commit, or the wrong done against one's neighbor. We release society from the presence of a criminal by putting him to death, but we cannot possibly know that the former might not have so changed by the morrow as to render the execution a useless cruelty. We imprison another, we believe him a dangerous man; but no later than next day this very man may have ceased to be dangerous, and his imprisonment has become unnecessary. I see a robber, a man known to me, pursuing a girl; I hold a gun in my hand; I wound or perhaps kill the robber, and save the girl. The fact that I have either wounded or killed the robber remains, but I know not what might have happened had I not done so. And what a vast amount of harm must and does accrue from the assurance that a man feels of his right to provide against a possible calamity. Ninety-nine parts of the world's iniquity, from the Inquisition to the bomb-throwing of the present day, and the execution of tens of thousands of political criminals, so called, result from this very assurance.

The fourth and still more ingenious reply to this question of the Christian's responsibility in regard to the commandment of Christ concerning non-resistance

to evil by violence, consists in asserting that this commandment is not denied, but acknowledged, like all the others; it is only the special significance attributed to it by sectarians that is denied. Our critics declare that the views of Garrison, Ballou, and Dymond, as well as those professed by the Quakers, the Shakers, the Menonites, the Moravians, the Waldenses, Albigenes, Bogomiles, and Paulicians, are those of bigoted sectarians. This commandment, they say, has the importance, no more and no less, of all the others; and one who through weakness has transgressed against any of the commandments, whether that of non-resistance or another, does not for that cause cease to be a Christian, provided his creed be true.

This is a very cunning and persuasive subterfuge, especially for those who are willing to be deceived, reducing the direct negation of the commandment to its accidental infraction. One has, however, but to compare the attitude of the clergy toward this or any of the other commandments which they do acknowledge, to be convinced that it is quite different from their attitude toward this one.

The commandment against fornication they acknowledge without reservation, and in no case will they ever admit that this sin is not an evil. There are no circumstances mentioned by the clergy when the commandment against fornication may be broken, and they always insist that the occasions for this sin must be avoided. But in regard to non-resistance it is a very different matter. Every clergyman believes that there are circumstances wherein this commandment may be held in abeyance, and they preach accordingly. So far from teaching their parishioners to avoid the temptations to this sin, chief among which is the oath of allegiance, they take the oath themselves. Clergymen have never been known to advocate the breaking of any other commandment; but in regard to the doctrine of non-resistance, they distinctly teach that this prohibition must not be taken too literally, that so far from always obeying this commandment, one should on occasion

follow the opposite course—that is, one should sit in judgment, should go to war, and should execute criminals. Thus in most of the cases where non-resistance to evil by violence is in question, the preachers will be found to advocate disobedience. Obedience to this commandment, they say, is difficult, and can only be practicable in a state of society whose members are perfect. But how is it to become less difficult, when its infraction is not only condoned, but directly encouraged, when legal tribunals, prisons, the implements of warfare, the cannon and muskets, armies and battles, receive the blessing of the Church? Therefore this reply is not true. Evidently the statement that this commandment is acknowledged by the clergy to be of equal validity with the other commandments cannot be true.

Clergymen do not really acknowledge it, yet, unwilling to admit this fact, they try by evasion to conceal their non-acknowledgment.

Such is the fourth method of answering.

The fifth, more ingenious than its predecessor, is the popular one of all. It consists in quietly evading reply, pretending that the question was solved ages ago, in a cogent and satisfactory manner, and that it would be a waste of words to reopen the subject. This method is employed by all the more cultured authors, who, if they made answer at all, would feel themselves bound to be logical. Realizing that the inconsistency between that doctrine of Christ, of which we make a verbal profession, and the scheme of our daily lives, is not to be solved by words, and that the more it is talked the more glaring this inconsistency becomes, they evade it with more or less circumspection, pretending that the question of union between Christianity and the law of violence has either been already solved, or else that it cannot be solved at all.¹

¹ I know of but one criticism, or rather essay, for it can hardly be termed criticism, in the strict sense of the word, which treats of the same subject, having my book in view. It is a pamphlet by Troitzky, called "The Sermon on the Mount" (printed in Kazan). Evidently the author acknowledges the doctrine of Christ in the fullness of its meaning. He declares that the commandment of non-resistance to evil means what it

Most of my clerical critics have made use of this method. I might quote scores of criticisms of this class, wherein everything is discussed except the vital principle of the book. As a characteristic specimen of these criticisms I will quote from an article by that well-known and scholarly Englishman, the writer and preacher, Canon Farrar, who, like so many other learned theologians, is an expert in the art of silently ignoring and evading a statement. The article appeared in an American magazine, *The Forum*, for October, 1888.

After briefly but conscientiously setting forth the subject-matter of my book, Farrar says: — "After repeated search the central principle of all Christ's teaching seemed to him [Tolstoï] to be, 'Resist not evil' or 'him that is evil.' He came to the conclusion that a coarse deceit had been palmed upon the world when these words were held by civil society to be compatible with war, courts of justice, capital punishment, divorce, oaths, national prejudice, and indeed with most of the institutions of civil and social life. He now believes that the Kingdom of God would come if all men kept these five commandments, which he holds to be the pith of all Christ's teaching — viz.: 1. Live in peace with all men. 2. Be pure. 3. Take no oaths. 4. Never resist evil. 5. Renounce national distinctions. Most of the Bible does not seem to him to reflect the spirit of Christ at all, though it has been brought into artificial and unwarrantable connection with it. Hence he rejects the chief doctrines of the Church: that of the Atonement by blood, that of the Trinity, that of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles and the transmission to the priesthood by laying on of hands, that of the need of the seven sac-

says, and the same with the commandment as to taking an oath. He does not deny, as others have done, the meaning of Christ's teaching, but unfortunately neither does he draw those inevitable conclusions which must result from a conception such as his own of Christ's doctrine. If one is not to resist evil by violence, nor to take an oath, it is but natural to ask: Then what is the duty of a soldier? And what is to be done about taking the oath of allegiance? But to these questions the author makes no reply, and surely a reply should have been given. If he had none to make, it would have been better to have said nothing at all.

raments for salvation. He sets aside the authority of Paul, of councils, of fathers, popes, or patriarchs, and believes himself to be the immediate disciple of Christ alone. But we are compelled to ask, Is this interpretation of Christ a true one? Are all men bound, or is any man bound, to act as this great writer has done?"

One might naturally expect that this vital question, which alone could induce a man to write a dissertation on the book, would be answered either by admitting that my interpretation of the doctrine of Christ is correct and should be accepted, or declaring that it is erroneous, proving his point, and offering a more correct interpretation of the words which I have misconstrued. But no; Farrar merely expresses his belief that "though actuated by the noblest sincerity, Count Tolstoï has been misled by partial and one-sided interpretations of the meaning of the gospel and the mind and will of Christ." In what this error consists he does not explain, but says: "*To enter into the proof of this is impossible in this article, for I have already exceeded the space at my command.*" And concludes with equanimity: "Meanwhile the reader who feels troubled lest it should be his duty also to forsake all the conditions of his life, and to take up the position and work of a common laborer, may rest for the present on the principle, 'Securus judicat orbis terrarum.' With few and rare exceptions the whole of Christendom, from the days of the Apostles down to our own, has come to the firm conclusion that it was the object of Christ to lay down great eternal principles, but not to disturb the bases and revolutionize the institutions as well as all inevitable conditions. Were it my object to prove how untenable is the doctrine of communism, based by Count Tolstoï upon the divine paradoxes, which can be interpreted on only historical principles in accordance with the whole method of the teaching of Jesus, it would require an ampler canvas than I have here at my disposal." What a pity that he has no space! And, wonderful to relate, no one for fifteen centuries ever had the space to prove that the Christ whom we profess said one thing and meant another. And of course

they could prove it if they would! But it is not worth while to prove what everybody knows to be true. It is enough to say: "*Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*"

The criticisms of all educated believers are very much alike, because realizing as they must the danger of their position, they feel that their only safeguard lies in the hope that by sheltering themselves behind the authority and holiness of the Church, they may succeed in intimidating their readers, or diverting them from any idea of reading the Bible for themselves or using their own reason to solve this question. And this is a method that succeeds. To whom would it ever occur, indeed, that all these assurances, repeated with so much solemnity, century after century, by archdeacons, bishops, and archbishops, synods and popes, are a base falsehood, a calumny against the character of Christ, uttered for the purpose of assuring to themselves the money they require to lead a life of ease at the expense of others, — a falsehood and a calumny so palpable, particularly now, that the only chance of perpetuating this falsehood lies in holding the people in awe by their arrogance and audacity?

The very same thing has been going on of late years in the Bureau of military conscription. A number of aged officials, decorated and self-important, are at a table, a full-lengthed portrait of the Emperor with the mirror of justice before them, and, while leisurely chatting with each other, they write, call out the names, and give their orders. Here also, with a cross upon his breast, his hair blowing over his stole, a genial and venerable-looking priest dressed in a silk robe sits before a pulpit on which is placed a golden cross and a Bible with gilt clasps.

Ivan Petrov is called. An untidy, poorly clad youth, with a frightened expression, twitching muscles, and gleaming eyes that have a wandering look, steps forward, and in a hesitating, broken voice almost whispers: "I according to law as a Christian I I cannot." "What is he muttering?" asks the chairman, impatiently, squinting and making an effort to hear, as he raises his head from the book. "Speak louder!"

exclaims the colonel with the glittering shoulder-straps. "As a Christian I I" And at last it becomes plain that the youth refuses to enter the military service because he is a Christian. "Don't talk nonsense! Measure him! Doctor, be kind enough to look at the measure. Will he do?" "He will do." "Holy Father, let him take the oath."

Not only is there no uneasiness on the part of the officers, but no one pays the least attention to the muttering of this frightened, pitiable youth. "They always mutter, and we are in a hurry; we have still so many more to receive."

The recruit tries to speak again. "This is against the law of Christ!" "Move on! move on! We know what is lawful and what is not! Move on! Father, make him understand! Next! Vassili Nikitin!"

Then the trembling youth is led away. Now which of all these men, the soldiers, Vassili Nikitin, the new man on the list, or any other witness of the scene, — which of these would ever dream that the unintelligible, broken utterances of the youth, silenced forthwith by the magistrates, embodied the real truth, while the loud, arrogant speeches of the officials, of the priest, uttered with authority, were actually false?

The same impression is made not only by Farrar's essay, but by all those grandiloquent sermons, reviews, and other publications which spring into existence on every side wherever truth is found combating the arrogance of falsehood. At once these orators and writers, subtle or bombastic, begin by dwelling upon points closely allied to the vital question, while preserving an artful silence on the question itself.

And this is the fifth and most efficacious method of accounting for the inconsistent attitude of ecclesiastical Christianity, which, while professing Christ, with its own life denies, and teaches others to deny, this doctrine in the practice of daily life. They who employ the first method of justification by boldly and distinctly affirming that Christ sanctioned violence, meaning wars and murders, put themselves beyond the pale of Christ's teach-

ing ; while they who defend themselves according to the second, third, and fourth methods soon become entangled, and are easily convicted of falsehood ; but the fifth class, they who condescend not to reason, use their dignity for a screen, and insist that all these questions were settled ages ago, and need no reconsideration ; they, apparently invulnerable, will maintain an undisputed authority, and men will repose under the hypnotic suggestion of Church and State, nor seek to throw off the yoke.

Such were the views of the clergy, of the professors of Christianity, in regard to my book, nor could anything different have been expected : they are in bonds to their inconsistent position, believers in the divinity of the Teacher, and yet discrediting His plainest words, — an inconsistency which they are bound to reconcile in some way. Hence it is not to be supposed that they would give unbiased opinions in regard to the essential question of that change which must take place in the life of one who makes a practical application of the doctrine of Christ to the existing order. From secular critics and free-thinkers, who acknowledge no obligation to the doctrine of Christ, and who might be expected to judge them without prejudice, I had prepared myself for criticisms such as these. I thought that the Liberals would look upon Christ not only as the founder of a religion involving personal salvation (as understood by the ecclesiastics and their followers), but, to use their own expression, as upon a reformer who tears down the old foundations to make way for new ones, and whose reformation is not even yet complete.

To set forth that conception of Christ and his doctrine has been the object of my book. But to my surprise not one out of the many criticisms, Russian or foreign, that have appeared, has accepted my view, or even discussed it from my standpoint, which is, that the teaching of Christ is a philosophical, moral, and social doctrine. (I use the phraseology of the scientists.) The Russian secular critics, conceiving the sum and substance of my book to be a plea in favor of resistance to evil, and taking it for granted (probably for the sake of argument) that the

doctrine forbade any struggle whatsoever against the wrong, made a virulent, and for several years, most successful attack upon this doctrine, proving that the teaching of Christ must be false, since it forbids any effort to overcome evil. Their refutations of this so-called *false* doctrine had all the more chance of success, because the censorship had prohibited, not only the book itself, but also all articles in its defense, and consequently they knew beforehand that their arguments could not be assailed.

It is worthy of note that here in Russia, where not a word against the Holy Scriptures is allowed by the censor, for several years in succession the distinct and unmistakable commandment of Christ (Matthew v. 39) was criticized, distorted, condemned, and mocked at in all the leading periodicals.

The Russian secular critics, apparently ignorant of all that had been said and done in regard to non-resistance to evil, seemed to think that I had invented the principle myself, and attacked it as if it were my idea, first distorting and then refuting it with great ardor, bringing forward time-worn arguments that had been analyzed and refuted over and over again, showing that the oppressed and downtrodden should be defended by violence, and declaring the doctrine of Christ concerning non-resistance to be immoral.

All the significance that the Russian critics saw in Christ's preaching was, that it seemed expressly intended to hamper them in their struggles against what they believe to be an evil in the present day. Thus it came about that the principle of non-resistance to evil by violence was attacked from two opposite camps; the Conservatives, because this principle interfered with them in their efforts to suppress sedition, and as opposed to all persecution, as well as to the punishment of death; the Revolutionists, because this principle forbade them to resist the oppression of the Conservatives, or to attempt their overthrow. The Conservatives were indignant that the doctrine of non-resistance to evil by violence should thwart an energetic suppression of revolutionary elements, which might imperil the welfare of

a nation; the Revolutionists in the like manner were indignant because this same doctrine averted the downfall of the Conservatives, who, in their opinion, imperil the welfare of the people. It is a circumstance worthy of notice that the Revolutionists should attack the principle of non-resistance to evil by violence; for of all the doctrines dreaded by despotism, and dangerous to its existence, this is the chief one. Since the creation of the world the opposite principle of resistance by violence has been the corner-stone of every despotic institution, from the Inquisition to the fortress of Schlüsselburg.

Moreover, the Russian critics declared that the progress of civilization itself would be checked were this commandment of non-resistance applied to everyday life, by which they mean the civilization of Europe, which is, according to them, the model for all mankind.

Such was the substance of Russian criticism.

Foreign critics start from the same premises, but their deductions differ somewhat from those of the Russian critics; not only are they less captious and more cultivated, but their modes of analysis are not the same.

In discussing my book, and more particularly the gospel doctrine as it is expressed in the Sermon on the Mount, the foreign critics affirmed that the latter could not really be called Christian doctrine (they believe that the Christian doctrine is embodied in Catholicism or Protestantism), and that the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount are only a series of the delightful but unpractical visions of the "charmant docteur," as Renan says, suited to the artless, half-civilized Galileans who lived 1800 years ago, or to the Russian and semi-barbarous peasants, to Sutaev and Bondarev, and to the Russian mystic Tolstoi, but which are by no means adapted to the lofty plane of European culture. The foreign secular critics, in a courteous way, in order not to wound my feelings, have endeavored to show that my belief that mankind may be guided by so simple a doctrine as the Sermon on the Mount arises partly from my limited knowledge of history and ignorance of the many vain attempts to carry out in daily life the princi-

ples of the Sermon on the Mount, which history tells us have always proved an utter failure, and partly from my misconception of the significance of our modern civilization, with its Krupp guns, its smokeless powder, its African colonization, its Home Rule, its parliaments, journalism, strikes, and constitutions, not to mention the Eiffel Tower, — on which the entire population of Europe is at present reposing.

Thus wrote Vogüé, thus wrote Leroy-Beaulieu, Matthew Arnold, the American writer Talmage, who is also a popular preacher, the free-thinker Ingersoll, and others.

“The teaching of Christ is no longer practicable, because it does not suit our industrial times,” Ingersoll ingenuously remarks, and thereby he no doubt gives utterance to the views which this cultured generation holds in regard to the doctrine of Christ. The doctrine has no affinity with the industrialism of the present age, as though industrialism were a sacred institution which can suffer no change. A drunkard might thus reply to one who calls upon him to be sober, that a man in liquor finds such advice absurd.

The arguments of all secular writers, Russian as well as foreign, however varied in form or expression, are substantially alike; they all agree in misapprehending the doctrine of Christ, with its outcome of non-resistance, and in affirming that it is not expedient because it implies a need of a change of life.

The doctrine of life is inexpedient, because if we lived up to it our lives could not go on as they have done hitherto; in other words, if we were to begin to live like righteous men, as Christ bids us, we must abandon the wicked ways to which we have grown accustomed. So far from discussing the question of non-resistance of evil by violence, the very mention of the fact that the precepts of Christ include such a command is considered as sufficient proof of the inexpediency of the whole doctrine.

And yet it would seem necessary to offer some solution of this question, as it lies at the root of all that most interests us.

The question is how to settle these differences among men, when the very action that is considered evil by one man is considered good by another. It is no answer to say that I think an action evil although my adversary may consider it a good one. There are but two ways of solving the difficulty. One is to find a positive and indisputable standard of evil, and the other is to obey the command, resist not evil by violence.

Men have tried to achieve the former from the earliest historical ages, and we all know with what unsuccessful results.

The second solution—that is, the non-resistance of what we must consider evil until we have found a universal standard: that solution has been suggested by Christ himself.

It might be thought that the solution suggested by Christ was the wrong one, and a better one might be substituted after the standard had been found which is to define evil once and for all. One might not know of the existence of such a question, as is the case with the barbarous races, but no one can be permitted to pretend, like the learned critics of the Christian doctrine, that no such question does exist, or that the recognition of the right of certain individuals or groups of individuals, and still less of one's own right, to define evil, and to resist it by violence, decides the question, because we all know that such a recognition does not decide it at all, for there are always persons who will refuse to admit that such a prerogative can exist.

And yet this very acknowledgment, that anything that seems evil to us is evil, or else an utter misconception of the question, affords a basis for the conclusions of secular critics concerning the doctrine of Christ; hence not only the utterances of the clerical, but also those of the secular critics in regard to my book, have made it evident to me that most men totally fail to comprehend either the doctrine of Christ, or the questions which it is intended to decide.

CHAPTER III

MISCONCEPTION OF CHRISTIANITY BY NON-BELIEVERS

The meaning of the Christian doctrine, which is clear for the minority, has become unintelligible for the majority of men — The cause of it is the false conception of Christianity and the misguided assurance of believers, as well as of unbelievers, that they apprehend it — The apprehension of Christianity for believers is concealed by the Church — The apprehension of Christianity — Its essence and its unlikeness to the pagan doctrines — Misunderstood at first, it has grown clear to those who embrace it owing to its correspondence with the truth — Contemporaneously with it arose the assertion that the true meaning of the doctrine was understood, and had been confirmed by miraculous transmission — The Council of Disciples according to the Acts — Authoritative and miraculous assertion of the true conception of Christ's doctrine has found its logical conclusion in the acknowledgment of the Credo and the Church — The Church could not have been established by Christ — Definition of Churches according to the Catechism — There are various Churches, ever antagonistic to one another — Where is heresy? — The work of Mr. Arnold concerning heresies — Heresies are the sign of activity in the Churches — Churches always divide mankind, and are ever inimical to Christianity — In what the activity of the Russian Church consists — Matthew xxiv. 23 — The Sermon on the Mount, or the Credo — The Orthodox Church conceals from the people the true meaning of Christianity — The same is done by other Churches — All the contemporary external conditions are such that they destroy the doctrine of the Church, and therefore Churches use all their efforts to defend it.

THE knowledge which I obtained after the publication of my book in regard to the views which the minority of mankind have held, and still hold, concerning the doctrine of Christ in its simplicity and real significance, as well as the criticisms of clerical and secular writers, who deny the possibility of apprehending it in its actual meaning, have convinced me that while the minority has not only always possessed a true conception of this doctrine, and that this conception has grown steadily more and more clear, for the majority, on the other hand, its sense has become more and more vague, reaching at last such a degree of obscurity that men fail to understand the simplest commands expressed in the Bible, even when couched in the plainest possible language.

The inability that prevails at the present time to comprehend the doctrine of Christ in its true, simple, and

actual meaning, when its light has penetrated into the remotest recesses of the human understanding, when, as Christ said, they proclaim from the roofs that which He whispered in the ear; when this doctrine penetrates every phase of human life, domestic, economical, civil, politic, and international, — this failure to apprehend it would be inexplicable, if one had not discovered the reasons for it.

One of the reasons is, that believers as well as unbelievers are perfectly sure that they long ago understood the doctrine of Christ so completely, unquestionably, and finally, that it can have no other meaning but the one which they attribute to it. That is because the tradition of this false conception has been handed down for ages, — and therefore its misconception.

The most powerful stream of water cannot add one single drop to a vessel that is already full.

One might succeed in explaining to the dullest of men the most difficult of problems, if he had no previous conception in regard to them; but it is impossible to explain to the cleverest man even the simplest matters, if he is perfectly sure that he knows everything about it.

The Christian doctrine appears to men of the present times to be a doctrine of that kind, known for ages, and never to be questioned in its most trivial details, and which is susceptible of no other interpretation.

At the present time Christianity is conceived by those who profess the doctrines of the Church as a supernatural, miraculous revelation of all that is expressed in the Credo; while unbelievers look upon it as an affair of the past, a manifestation of the demand of humanity for a belief in the supernatural, as an historical fact, which has found its fullest expression in Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Protestantism, and which has for us no vital meaning. For the believers the real significance of the doctrine is concealed by the Church; for the unbelievers it is hidden by science.

Let us begin by considering the former.

Eighteen hundred years ago, in the pagan world of Rome, there appeared a strange and novel doctrine,

unlike any of its predecessors, which was ascribed to the man Christ.

It was a doctrine wholly new in form as well as in substance, both for the Hebrew world, from whose midst it had sprung, as well as for the Roman world, in whose midst it was preached and promulgated.

Among the accurately defined religious precepts of the Jews, where, according to Isaiah, there was precept upon precept, and among the highly perfected Roman legislative assemblies, there appeared a doctrine that not only repudiated all deities, all fear of them, all augury and all faith in it, but also denied the necessity for any human institutions whatsoever. Instead of the precepts and creeds of former times, this doctrine presented only an image of interior perfection, truth, and love in the person of Christ, and the attainment of this interior perfection possible for men, and, as a consequence, of the outward perfection foretold by the prophets: the coming of the Kingdom of God, when all enmity shall cease, when every man will hear the word of the Lord and be united with another in brotherly love, and when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together. Instead of threats of punishment for the non-observance of the commandments of the old laws, religious no less than secular, instead of tempting men by promise of rewards to observe these laws, this doctrine attracted mankind only by proclaiming itself to be the truth.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." — John vii. 17.

"Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" — John viii. 46.

"But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth." — John viii. 40.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." — John viii. 32.

God must be worshiped in truth. All the doctrine will be made plain by the Spirit of Truth. Do as I command you, and you will know whether what I say is the truth.

No evidence was brought to prove the doctrine, except the truth and its harmony therewith. The whole substance consisted in learning the truth and in following its guidance, drawing nearer and nearer to it in the affairs of everyday life.

According to this doctrine, there is no mode of action that can justify a man or make him righteous; as regards interior perfection we have only the image of truth, in the person of Christ, to win our hearts, and outward perfection is expressed by a realization of the Kingdom of God. In order to fulfil the doctrine it needs but to take Christ for our model, and to advance in the direction of interior perfection by the road which has been pointed out to us, as well as in that of exterior perfection, which is the establishment of the Kingdom of God. The degree of human happiness, whether it be more or less, depends, according to this doctrine, not on the degree of perfection at which it arrives, but on the comparative rate of progress toward that perfection.

The advance toward perfection of Zacchæus the publican, of the adulteress, of the thief on the cross, is, according to this doctrine, better than the stagnation of the righteous Pharisee. The shepherd rejoices more over the one sheep which was lost and is found than over the ninety and nine which are in the fold. The prodigal returned, the piece of money which was lost and is found, is more precious unto God than that which was never lost.

According to this doctrine, each state is but a step on the road toward the unattainable interior and exterior perfection, and therefore it has no significance in itself. The progress of this movement toward perfection is its merit; the least cessation of this movement means the cessation of good works.

“Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth,” and “No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” “Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written

in heaven." "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

The fulfilment of the doctrine lies in a continual progress toward the attainment of a higher truth, and in the growing realization of that truth within one's self, by means of an ever increasing love; as well as in a more and more keen realization of the Kingdom of God in the world around us. It is evident that the doctrine that appeared in the midst of the Hebrew and pagan world could not be accepted by the majority of men, who lived a life so totally unlike the one prescribed by this new doctrine; and even those who did accept it could not comprehend its full meaning, because of its contradiction of all former ideas.

It is only through a series of misapprehensions, errors, one-sided explanations, corrected and supplemented by generations of men, that the meaning of the Christian doctrine has become more and more plain. The Christian world-conception and that of the Hebrew and pagan peoples mutually acted and reacted upon each other, and the Christian principle being the more vital, it penetrated deeper and deeper into the Hebrew and pagan principles that had outlived their usefulness, and became more clearly defined, freeing itself from the spurious admixtures imposed upon it. Men understood its meaning better and better, and realized it more and more unmistakably in life.

The older the world grew, the more lucid became its apprehension of Christianity, as must always be the case with any doctrine relating to human life.

Successive generations rectified the mistakes of the preceding ones and approached nearer and nearer to the apprehension of its true meaning. Thus it was from the very beginning of Christianity. And it was then that certain men came to the front who affirmed that the only true interpretation was the one which they themselves proclaimed, adducing the miracles as a proof thereof.

This was the principal cause of its misapprehension

in the first place, and of its complete perversion in the second.

The doctrine of Christ was supposed to be transmitted to mankind not like any other truth, but in a peculiar, supernatural manner; hence they propose to prove its authority, not because it satisfies the demands of reason and of human nature in general, but because of the miraculous character of its transmission, which is supposed to be an incontrovertible proof of the validity of its conception. This idea sprang from a misconception, and the result was that it became impossible to understand it.

It originated at the very beginning, when the doctrine was so imperfectly understood and often so erroneously construed; as, for example, in the Gospels and the Acts. The less men understood it, the more mysterious it appeared, and the greater need was there for visible proof of its authenticity. The rule for doing unto others as you would wish them to do unto you, called for no miraculous proof, neither did it require faith, because the proposition is convincing in itself, both to reason and to human nature. But the proposition that Christ was God needed miraculous testimony.

The more mystical grew the apprehension of Christ's teaching, the more the miraculous element entered into it; and the more miraculous it became, the farther it was from its original meaning; and the more complicated, mystical, and remote from its original meaning it came to be, the more necessary it was to declare its infallibility, and the less intelligible it became.

From the very beginning of Christianity one could see from the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles how the misapprehension of the doctrine called forth the necessity of proofs—miraculous and beyond human intelligence.

It dated from the time mentioned in the Acts, when the disciples went up to Jerusalem to consult with the elders in regard to the question that had arisen as to whether the uncircumcised and those who abstained not from the meat offered to idols should be baptized.

The very manner of asking the question showed that those who discussed it misconceived the doctrine of Christ, who rejected all external rites, such as the washing of the feet, purification, fasts, and the Sabbath. It is said distinctly: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man." And therefore the question in regard to the baptism of those not circumcised could only arise among men who, loving their Teacher and with the intuitive perception of the grandeur of his doctrine, could not as yet comprehend its exact meaning. And so it was.

And in proportion as the members of the assembly failed to comprehend the doctrine, did they stand in need of an outward affirmation of their incomplete conception. And in order to decide the question, whose very proposal proves the misconception of the doctrine, it was that in this assembly for the first time, according to the description given in the Acts, were uttered those awful words, productive of so much harm, by which the truth of certain propositions has been for the first time confirmed: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us;" that is to say, it was a declaration that the truth of what they said was witnessed by a miraculous participation of the Holy Ghost, that is — of God.

But the assertion that the Holy Ghost — that is to say, God — had spoken through the apostles, in its turn required proof. And therefore it became necessary to declare that on the fiftieth day the Holy Ghost, in the shape of fiery tongues, descended on those who had made this assertion. [In the description the descent of the Holy Ghost precedes the council, but the Acts were written much later than either.] But the descent of the Holy Ghost must also be proved, though it would be difficult to say why a fiery tongue hovering over a man's head should be a proof of the truth of what he says any more than the miracles, the cures, the resurrections, the martyrdoms, and all the rest of those persuasive miracles with which the Acts are filled, and which serve rather to repel than to convince one of the truth of the Chris-

tian dogmas. The results of these methods were such that the more pains they took to confirm their statements, accumulating stories of miracles, the more the doctrine itself deviated from its original meaning, and the less intelligible it became.

Thus it was from the beginning of the Christian era, and thus it continued to increase, until in its own time it has reached its logical consummation in the dogma of transubstantiation, the infallibility of the Pope, the bishops, and Scriptures, which is something utterly incomprehensible and nonsensical, requiring a blind faith, not in God or Christ, nor even in the doctrine, but a faith either in one person, as in Catholicism, or in many persons, as in Orthodoxy, or in a book, as in Protestantism. The more widely spread Christianity became, and the larger the number of uninstructed men it received, the less it was understood, the more the infallibility of its conceptions was insisted upon, and the more slender grew the possibility of understanding its true meaning. Already, about the time of Constantine, the entire conception of the doctrine amounted to the *résumé* formulated by the temporal power, — the outcome of discussions that took place in the council, — to the Credo, in which it is said : I believe in this and that, etc., and at the end, “in the one holy, Apostolic and Œcumenical Church,” that is, in the infallibility of the persons who constitute it ; so that it all amounted to this, that a man believed not in God, nor in Christ, as they revealed themselves to him, but in that which was believed by the Church.

But the Church is holy, and was founded by Christ. God could not allow men to interpret His doctrine as they chose, and therefore He established the Church. All these propositions are so unjust and unfounded, that one is actually ashamed to refute them. In no place, and in no manner whatsoever, save in the assertion of the Church, is it seen that either God or Christ can ever have founded anything like the Church in its ecclesiastical sense. There is a distinct and evident warning in the New Testament against the Church, as an outside authority, in the passage which bids the disciples of

Christ call no man father or master. But nowhere is there a word in regard to the establishment of what the ecclesiastics call the Church. The word "church" is used in the New Testament twice, once in speaking of the assembly which is to decide a dispute ; the second time in connection with the obscure words in regard to the rock, Peter, and the gates of hell. From these two references, where the word is used only in the sense of an assembly, men have derived the institution which we recognize at present under the name of the Church.

But Christ could by no means have founded a church, that is, what we understand by that word at the present time, because nothing like our Church, as we know it in these days, with the sacraments, the hierarchy, and above all the establishment of infallibility, was to be found either in the words of Christ, or in the ideas of the men of those times.

Because men have called something which has been established since, by the same word that Christ used in regard to another thing, by no means gives them a right to assert that Christ founded only one true Church.

Moreover, if Christ had it in his mind to establish a church which was to be the depository of the whole doctrine and faith, He would surely have expressed this so plainly and clearly, and would have given, apart from all stories of miracles which are repeated with every variety of superstition, such signs as would leave no doubt as to its authenticity ; yet this was not the case, and now, as always, one finds different institutions, each one calling itself the only true Church.

The Catholic catechism says : " L'Eglise est la société des fidèles établie par N.-S. Jésus-Christ, répandue sur toute la terre et soumise à l'autorité de pasteurs légitimes, principalement notre S.-P. le pape," — meaning by " pasteurs légitimes,"¹ a human institution made up of a number of men bound together by a certain organization of which the Pope is the head.

¹ The Church is the society of the faithful, established by our Lord Jesus Christ, diffused throughout the world, subject to the authority of its lawful pastors and our holy father the Pope.

The Orthodox catechism says: "Our Church is a society established on earth by Jesus Christ, united by the divine doctrine and the sacraments under the government and direction of a hierarchy established by the Lord," — those words, "established by the Lord," signifying a Greek hierarchy, composed of certain men who are ordained to fill certain places.

The Lutheran catechism says: "Our Church is a holy Christian society of believers under Christ, our Master, in which the Holy Ghost, by means of the Bible and the sacraments, offers, communicates, and dispenses the divine salvation," — meaning by that, that the Catholic Church is in error, and has fallen away from grace, and that the genuine tradition has been preserved in Protestantism.

For Catholics the divine Church is identified with the Pope and the Roman hierarchy. For the Orthodox it is identified with the institution of the Eastern and Russian hierarchy.¹ For Lutherans the divine Church signifies a congregation of men who acknowledge the Bible and the Lutheran catechism.

¹ The definition of Homiakov, which had a certain success among the Russians, does not help the case, if one believes with him that the Orthodox is the only true Church. Homiakov asserts that a church is a society of men (without distinction between the ecclesiastics and the laity) united by love, and to whom the truth is revealed ("Let us love one another, that we may unanimously profess," etc.), and that such a church is, in the first place, one that professes the Nicene creed, and, secondly, one which, after the division of the churches, refused to recognize the authority of the Pope and the new dogmas. With such a definition as this, the difficulty of identifying a church which is united by love with a church professing the Nicene creed, and the accuracy of Photius, as Homiakov would have it, is still greater. Hence the statement of Homiakov that this church united by love, and therefore holy, is the same as that of the Greek hierarchy, is still more arbitrary than the assertions of the Catholics and the old Greek Orthodox believers. If we admit the existence of the Church according to the idea of Homiakov, that is, as a society of men united by love and truth, then all that any man can say in regard to it, is that it would be most desirable to be a member of that society, — if such an one exists, — that is, to live in the spirit of love and truth; but there are no outward manifestations by which one could either acknowledge one's self, or recognize others as members of this holy society, or exclude one's self from it, for there is no outward institution to be found which corresponds to that idea.

When those who belong to any one of the existing churches speak of the beginnings of Christianity, they generally use the word "church" in the singular, as though there had never been but one church. This is quite unfair. The Church, which as an institution declares itself to be the depository of infallible truth, did not arise until there were already two.

While the faithful still agreed among themselves, the congregation was united, and there was no occasion for calling itself a church. It was only when it separated into two hostile parties that each party felt obliged to assert its possession of the truth by claiming infallibility.

During the course of the controversies between the two parties, while each one claimed infallibility for itself and declared its opponent heretical, arose the idea of the one church.

We know that there was a church in the year 51, which granted the admission of the uncircumcised, and we know it only because there was another, the Jewish Church, which denied their right to membership.

If at the present time there is a Catholic Church which asserts its infallibility, it is because there are other churches, namely, the Greek Orthodox and the Lutheran, each one asserting its own infallibility, and thus disowning all other churches. Hence the idea of one church is but the product of the imagination, containing not a shadow of reality.

It is an historical fact that there have existed, and still continue to exist, numerous bodies, each one of whom maintains itself to be the true Church established by Christ, declaring at the same time that all the others who call themselves churches are heretical and schismatic.

The catechisms of those churches which possess the greatest number of communicants, the Catholic, the Orthodox, and the Lutheran, express this in the plainest language.

The Catholic catechism says: "Quels sont ceux qui sont hors de l'Eglise? Les infidèles, hérétiques, et

schismatiques.”¹ By schismatics it means the so-called Orthodox, and by heretics the Lutherans; so that, according to the Catholic catechism, the Church is composed only of Catholics.

In the so-called Orthodox catechism it says: “The name Church of Christ means only the Orthodox Church, which has remained in perfect union with the universal Church. As to the Roman Church and the Protestant creeds” (they are not even called a church), “they cannot belong to the one true Church, for they have separated themselves from it.”

According to this definition the Catholics and the Protestants are outside of the Church, and only the Orthodox are in it.

The Lutheran catechism says: “Die wahre Kirche wird darein erkannt, das in ihr das Wort Gottes lauter und rein ohne Menschenzusatzung gelehrt und die Sacramenten treu nach Christ Einsetzung gewartet werden.”²

According to this definition, those who have added anything whatsoever to the teaching of Christ and the apostles, as the Catholic and Greek Churches have done, are outside the Church, and the Lutherans alone are in it.

The Catholics assert that the Holy Ghost dwells perpetually with their hierarchy; the Orthodox assert that the same Holy Ghost resides also with them; the Arians claim that the Holy Ghost manifests itself to them (and they have the same right to assert this as have the prevailing religions of the present day); all the denominations of Protestants — Lutherans, Reformed Presbyterians, Methodists, Swedenborgians, and Mormons — assert that the Holy Ghost manifests itself only with them.

If the Catholics assert that the Holy Ghost during the separation of the Arian and Greek Churches withdrew from the separating churches and remained in the one

¹ Who are those outside the Church? The infidels, heretics, and schismatics.

² Thereby may be the true Church known that in it the word of God is taught plainly and clearly, without human additions, and that sacraments are administered faithfully according to the teaching of Christ.

true Church, then the Protestants of any denomination whatsoever may assert with as much right that during the separation of their Church from the Catholic, the Holy Ghost left the Catholic Church and entered into their own. And this is exactly what they do say. Every church professes to derive its creed by an unbroken tradition from Christ and the apostles. And certainly every Christian creed derived from Christ must have reached the present generation through tradition of some sort. But this is no proof that any one of these traditions embodies infallible truth, to the exclusion of all others.

Every branch proceeds from the root without interruption; but the fact that each one comes from one root, by no means proves it to be the only branch. And so it is in regard to the churches. The proofs which each church offers of its apostolic succession, and the miracles which are to prove its authenticity, are the same in every case; consequently there is but one exact definition of what is called a church (not the imaginary church which we may desire, but the actual church which has really existed). The Church is a body of men which lays claim to the exclusive possession of the truth. All these various societies which were afterward transformed by State authority into powerful organizations have really been the chief obstacles to the diffusion of true Christianity. It could not be otherwise: for the principal characteristic which distinguishes the doctrine of Christ from those of earlier times is that the men who accepted it strove to understand and to fulfil it more and more perfectly; whereas the doctrine of the Church affirmed that it was already thoroughly understood and also fulfilled.

However strange this may seem to us, reared as we have been in the false doctrine of the Church, as if it were a Christian institution, and taught to despise heresy, it is nevertheless in that which men call heresy that true progress, that is, true Christianity, was manifested, and it only ceased to be such when these heresies were checked, and it was, so to speak, stamped with the immutable imprint of the Church.

What, then, is heresy? Read all the theological works which treat of heresies, of that subject which above all others calls for an exact definition, for every theologian speaks of the true doctrine in the midst of the false ones by which it is surrounded, and nowhere will you find even the shadow of a definition of heresy.

As an instance of the complete absence of the definition of what is understood by the word heresy, we will quote the opinion of a learned Christian historian, E. de Pressensé in "*Histoire du Dogme*," with its epigraph, "*Ubi Christus, ibi Ecclesia*" (Paris, 1869). This is what he says in his preface (p. 4):—

"I know that they dispute our right to qualify thus" (that is, to pronounce them heretical) "the tendencies which were so actively resisted by the early Fathers. The very name of heresy seems an attack upon liberty of conscience and thought. We cannot share these scruples, for they would simply deprive Christianity of any individual character."

And having said that after Constantine the Church did in fact abuse its authority to describe the dissenters as heretics and to persecute them, he says, in speaking of the early ages of Christianity: "The Church is a free association; there is an advantage to be gained in separating from it. The controversy against error is based on feelings and ideas; no uniform body of dogma has as yet been adopted; differences of secondary importance appear in the East and West with perfect freedom; theology is not limited by unalterable formulas. If amid these varying opinions a common groundwork of faith is discerned, have we not the right to see in this, not a definite system devised and formulated by the representatives of a school, but faith itself in its most unerring instinct and spontaneous manifestation? If this very unanimity which is revealed in the essential matters of faith is found to be antagonistic to certain tendencies, have we not the right to infer that these tendencies disagreed with the fundamental principles of Christianity? Will not this supposition become a certainty if we recognize in the doctrine rejected by the Church the charac-

teristic features of one of the religions of the past? If we admit that gnosticism or ebionitism are legitimate forms of Christian thought, we must boldly declare that Christian thought does not exist, nor does it possess any specific characteristic by which it may be recognized. We should destroy it even while pretending to enlarge its limits. In the time of Plato no one would have dared to advocate a doctrine which would leave no room for the theory of ideas, and he would have been subjected to the well-deserved ridicule of Greece, if he attempted to make of Epicurus or of Zeno a disciple of the Academy. Let us then admit that if there exists a religion or a doctrine called Christianity, it may have its heresies."

The writer's argument amounts to this, that every opinion which does not accord with the code of dogmas that we have professed at any given time, is a heresy. At a certain time and in a certain place men make a certain profession, but this profession can never be a fixed criterion of the truth. All is summed up in the "Ubi Christus, ibi Ecclesia," and Christ is wherever we are.

Every so-called heresy which claims that what it professes is the actual truth, may likewise find in the history of the Church a consistent explanation of the faith it professes, and apply all the arguments to its own use. Pressensé simply calls his own creed Christian truth, precisely as every heretical sect has done.

The primary definition of the word heresy (the word *αἵρεσις* means a part) is the name given by a society of men to any opinion contradicting any part of the doctrine professed by the society. A more specific meaning is an expression of an opinion which denies the truth of the creed, established and maintained by the temporal power.

There is a remarkable, although little known, work entitled "Unpartheyische Kirchen und Ketzer-Historie," 1729, by Gottfried Arnold, which treats of this subject, and points out the illegality, the perversity, the lack of sense, and the cruelty of employing the word heresy in the sense of refutation. This book is an attempt to relate

the history of Christianity in the form of a history of heresies.

In his introduction the author asks a series of questions: (1) Of those who make heretics (*Von denen Ketzermachern selbst*); (2) Of those who have become heretics; (3) Of the subjects of heresy; (4) Of the ways of making heretics; and (5) Of the aims and consequences of the making of heretics. To each of these points he adds scores of other questions, giving the answers from the works of well-known theologians, but principally leaving it to the reader to draw his own deductions from the contents of the book. As instances of questions which are to a certain extent their own answers I will quote the following:—Concerning the 4th question, of the methods for making heretics, he asks in one of the questions (the 7th): “Does not all history tend to show us that the greatest makers of heretics, the adepts in the art, were those very wiseacres from whom the Father concealed his secrets—that is, the hypocrites, the Pharisees, and the Scribes, or utterly godless and evil-minded men? (Question 20–21) And in the corrupted times of Christianity did not the hypocrites and envious ones reject the very men, talented and especially indorsed by the Lord, who would have been highly esteemed in periods of pure Christianity? (21) And, on the other hand, would not those men who during the decadence of Christianity rose above all others, and set themselves up as teachers of the purest Christianity, would not they, during the times of the apostles of Christ and his disciples, have been considered as the shameful heretics and anti-Christians?” Among other things, while expressing the idea that the verbal declaration of the essence of faith which was required by the Church, the abjuration of which was regarded as a heresy, could never cover all the ideas and beliefs of the faithful, and that hence the requirement that faith shall be expressed by a certain formula of words is the immediate cause of heresy, he says in the 21st question:—

“And supposing that holy acts and thoughts appear to a man so high and so profound that he finds no ade-

quate words wherewith to convey them, should he be considered a heretic if he is unable to formulate his conception? (33) And was not this the reason why there were no heresies in the early times of Christianity, because Christians judged each other, not by their words, but by their hearts and by their deeds, enjoying a perfect freedom of expression, without the fear of being called heretic?" "Was it not one of the convenient and easiest methods of the Church," he asks in the 31st question, "when the ecclesiastics wished to rid themselves of any one, or ruin his reputation, to excite suspicion in regard to the doctrine he held, and by investing him in the garment of heresy, condemn and cast him out?"

"Although it is true that among so-called heretics sins and errors have been committed, it is no less true, as the numerous examples here quoted bear testimony" (that is to say, in the history of the Church and of heresies), "that there has never been a sincere and conscientious man of any importance whose safety has not been endangered through the envy of the ecclesiastics."

This was the interpretation of heresy almost 200 years ago, and the same meaning is attached to it to-day, and so long as the idea of the Church shall exist it will never change. Where the Church exists there must also exist the idea of heresy. The Church is a body of men claiming possession of indisputable truth. A heresy is the opinion of men who do not acknowledge the truth of the Church to be indisputable.

Heresy is the manifestation of a movement in the Church; it is an attempt to destroy the immutable assertion of the Church, the attempt of a living apprehension of the doctrine. Each advance that has been made toward the comprehension and the practice of the doctrine has been accomplished by heretics: Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, and Luthur, Huss, Savonarola, Helchitsky, and others were all heretics. It could not be otherwise.

A disciple of Christ, who possesses an ever growing sense of the doctrine and of its progressive fulfilment as

it advances toward perfection, cannot, either for himself or others, affirm, simply because he is a disciple of Christ, that he understands and practises the doctrine of Christ to its fullest extent; still less could he affirm this in regard to any body of men. To whatsoever state of comprehension and perfection he may have arrived, he must always feel the inadequacy both of his conception and of its application, and must ever strive for something more satisfactory. And therefore to claim for one's self, or for any body of men whatsoever, the possession of a complete apprehension and practice of the doctrine of Christ is in direct contradiction to the spirit of Christ's doctrine itself.

However strange this statement may appear, every church, as a church, has always been, and always must be, an institution not only foreign, but absolutely hostile, to the doctrine of Christ. It is not without reason that Voltaire called it "*l'infâme*"; it is not without reason that all so-called Christian sects believe the Church to be the Scarlet Woman prophesied by the Revelation; it is not without reason that the history of the Church is the history of cruelties and horrors.

Churches in themselves are, as some persons believe, institutions based upon a Christian principle, from which they have deviated to a certain extent; but considered in the light of churches, of bodies of men claiming infallibility, they are anti-Christian institutions. Between churches in the ecclesiastical sense and Christianity, not only is there nothing in common except the name, but they are two utterly contradictory and hostile elements. One is pride, violence, self-assertion, inertia, and death. The other is meekness, repentance, submission, activity, and life.

No man can serve these two masters at the same time; he must choose either the one or the other.

The servants of the churches of every creed, especially in these modern times, strive to represent themselves as the partisans of progress in Christianity; they make concessions, they try to correct the abuses that have crept into the Church, and protest that it is wrong to deny the

principle of the Christian Church on account of these abuses, because it is only through the medium of the Church that unity can be obtained, and that the Church is the only mediator between God and man. All this is untrue. So far from fostering the spirit of unity, the churches have ever been the fruitful source of human enmity, of hatred, wars, conflicts, inquisitions, Eves of St. Bartholomew, and so on; neither do the churches act as the mediators between God and man,—an office, moreover, quite unnecessary, and directly forbidden by Christ himself, who has revealed his doctrine unto each individual; it is but the dead formula, and not the living God, which the churches offer to man, and which serves rather to increase than diminish the distance between man and his Creator. The churches, which were founded upon a misconception, and which preserve this misconception by their immutability, must of necessity harass and persecute any new conception, because they know, however they may try to conceal it, that every advance along the road indicated by Christ is undermining their own existence.

Whenever one reads or listens to the essays and sermons in which ecclesiastical writers of modern times belonging to the various creeds discuss the Christian truths and virtues, when one hears and reads these artificial arguments, these exhortations, these professions of faith, elaborated through centuries, that now and then sound sincere, one is almost ready to doubt if the churches can be inimical to Christianity. “It cannot be possible that men like John Chrysostom, Fénelon, Butler, and other Christian preachers, could be inimical to it.” One would like to say, “The churches may have gone astray from Christianity, may have committed errors, but they cannot have been hostile to it.” But one must first see the fruit before he can know the tree, as Christ has taught, and one sees that their fruits were evil, that the result of their works has been the distortion of Christianity; and one cannot help concluding that, however virtuous the men may have been, the cause of the church in which these men served was not Christian. The goodness and

virtue of certain individuals who served the churches were peculiar to themselves, and not to the cause which they served. All these excellent men, like Francis of Assisi and Francis de Sales, Tichon Zadònsky, Thomas à Kempis, and others, were good men, even though they served a cause hostile to Christianity; and they would have been still more charitable and more exemplary had they not yielded obedience to false doctrines.

But why do we speak of, or sit in judgment on, the past, which may be falsely represented, and is, in any event, but little known to us? The churches, with their principles and their works, are not of the past; we have them with us to-day, and can judge them by their works and by their influence over men.

What, then, constitutes their power? How do they influence men? What is their work in the Greek, the Catholic, and in all the Protestant denominations? and what are the consequences of such work?

The work of our Russian so-called Orthodox Church is visible to all. It is a factor of primary importance, which can neither be concealed nor disputed.

In what manner is the activity of the Russian Church displayed,—that vast institution which labors with so much zeal, that institution which numbers among its servants half a million of men, and costs the people tens of millions?

The activity of the Church consists in forcing, by every means in its power, upon the one hundred millions of Russian people, those antiquated, time-worn beliefs which have lost all significance, and which were formerly professed by foreigners, with whom we had nothing in common, beliefs in which nearly every man has lost his faith, even in some cases those very men whose duty it is to inculcate them.

The endeavor to force upon the people those formulas of the Byzantine clergy, marvelous to them and senseless to us, concerning the Trinity, the Virgin, the sacraments, grace, and so forth, embraces one province of the activity of the Russian Church; another function is the encouragement given to idolatry, in the literal sense of

the word : the veneration of holy relics and holy images, the sacrifices offered to them in the faith that they will hear and grant prayers. I will pass over in silence what is written in the ecclesiastical magazines by the clergy who possess a semblance of learning and liberality, and will speak only of what is really done by the clergy throughout the immense extent of Russia, among its one hundred millions of inhabitants. What is it that is taught to the people with such unremitting pains and endeavor, and with so much earnestness? What is required of them for the sake of the so-called Christian religion?

I will start at the beginning, with the birth of the child. When a child is born, we are taught that a prayer must be read over the mother and child, in order to purify them, for without that prayer the mother remains unclean. For that purpose, and facing the ikons of the saints, whom the common people simply call gods, the priest takes the infant in his arms, reads the exhortation, and by that means he is supposed to cleanse the mother. Then the parents are instructed, nay, even ordered, under penalty of punishment in the event of non-compliance, to christen the child—that is, to let the priest immerse it three times in the water, while words unintelligible to all present are read, and still less intelligible ceremonies are performed, such as the application of oil to different parts of the body, the cutting of the hair, the blowing and spitting of the sponsors at the imaginary devil. All this is necessary to cleanse the child, and make a Christian of him. Then the parents are told that the child must receive the holy sacrament—that is, he is to swallow, in the form of bread and wine, a particle of the body of Christ, by which means the child will receive the blessing of Christ, and so on. Then they are told that as the child grows it must be taught to pray, which means that he is to stand in front of boards upon which the faces of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints are painted, bow his head and body, while with his right hand, his fingers being folded in a peculiar manner, he touches his forehead, his shoulders, and his

stomach, and utters certain Slavonic words, the commonest of which, those which all children learn, are the following: "Mother of God, ... Virgin, rejoice," etc. Then the child is taught that he must repeat this — that is, that he must make the sign of the cross whenever he sees a church or an ikon. Furthermore, he is taught that on a holiday (holidays are either the day on which Christ was born, although no one knows when that took place, or the day of his circumcision, or that on which the Virgin died, or when the cross or the ikon was brought, or when some fanatic beheld a vision, etc.) he should array himself in his best clothes, go to church, buy candles, and set them up before the ikons of the saints, give to the priest memoranda bearing the names of the dead who are to be prayed for, receive bread with triangular pieces cut out of it, pray repeatedly for the health and welfare of the Czar and bishops, as well as for himself and his own affairs, and then kiss the cross and the hand of the priest.

Thus is he taught to pray; and besides this, he is also taught that he must perform his devotions once a year. To perform one's devotions means to go to church and tell one's sins to the priest, it being assumed that this recital of one's sins to a stranger will have a purifying effect on a man; then he is to swallow a spoonful of bread and wine, which will purify him still more. Moreover, men are told that if a man and woman desire to have their sexual relation sanctified they must come to church, put crowns of metal upon their heads, swallow some wine, walk three times round a table, accompanied by the sound of singing, and this will make their sexual relation holy and entirely different from any others.

In daily life the observation of the following rules is enjoined: to eat no meat nor drink no milk on certain days, to say *Te Deums* and *Requiems* on certain other days, to invite the priest to one's house on holidays and present him with money; to take from the church several times a year boards upon which are painted the images of the saints, and to carry them on towels through fields and houses. Before death a man must without fail re-

ceive a spoonful of bread and wine ; and if there be time to be anointed with oil, that is still better, for it insures his welfare in the future life. After his death his relatives are told that, in order to save his soul, it is well to place in his hand a printed prayer ; it is also a good thing to read a certain book over the dead, and for his name to be mentioned in church at stated times.

This is what constitutes every man's religious obligation. But if any one wishes to take a special care of his soul, this creed teaches that the greatest amount of happiness may be secured in the next world by bequeathing money for churches and monasteries, thereby obliging the saints to pray for one. According to this faith it is also well to visit monasteries and kiss the miraculous ikons and the relics.

These are believed to impart a peculiar holiness, strength, and grace ; and to be near these objects, as one must be in kissing them, placing tapers before them, crawling under them, and repeating *Te Deums* before them, greatly promotes salvation.

And this is the faith called Orthodox, this is the true faith, the one which, under the garb of a Christian religion, has been energetically taught to the people for many centuries, and is inculcated at the present time more vigorously than ever.

Let it not be said that the Orthodox teachers look upon all this as an ancient form of faith which it was not considered worth while to abolish, and that the essence of the doctrine abides elsewhere. This is not the truth. Throughout Russia, and lately with increased energy, the entire Russian clergy teaches this faith, and this alone. Nothing else is taught. Men may write about other doctrines and discuss them in the capitals, but among the hundred million inhabitants this, and only this, is taught. The ecclesiastics may discuss other doctrines, but only this is what is taught.

All this—the worship of relics and shrines—is included in theology and the catechism ; the people are carefully instructed in all this, theoretically and practically, by every kind of solemnity, splendor, authority,

and violence; the people are compelled to believe in it all; they are hypnotized, and the faith is jealously guarded against any attempt to deliver them from these foolish superstitions.

As I said in my book, I have during the course of many years had frequent opportunities to remark the ridicule and rude jests that have been applied to Christ's words and doctrine, and the ecclesiastics not only failed to condemn it, they even encouraged this scoffing; but let a man venture to say one disrespectful word of the ugly idol called the Iverskaya,¹ sacrilegiously carried around Moscow by intoxicated men, and a groan of indignation will rise from these same Orthodox ecclesiastics. In fact, it is only an external worship in the form of idolatry that is propagated. And let it not be said that the one does not exclude the other, that "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matthew xxiii. 3). This is said concerning the Pharisees, who fulfilled all the outward commands of the law, and therefore the words, "whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do," refer to acts of benevolence and charity; whereas the words, "do not ye after their works, for they say and do not," refer to their observances of the rites and their indifference to works of charity, and directly contradicts the clerical interpretation of this passage, which explains it as a commandment which has to do only with the rites. An external worship is hardly compatible with the service of charity and truth; one is apt to exclude the other. It was so with the Pharisees, and the same may be said of our professing Christians.

If a man is to be saved by redemption, the sacraments, and prayer, good works are no longer of any value to him. It must be either the Sermon on the Mount or the Credo. No man can believe in both, and the ecclesiastics have chosen the latter. The Credo is taught and recited

¹ The ikon of the Virgin which stands in a chapel in the heart of Moscow, and which is the object of a special veneration to the Russians
—TR.

as a prayer in the churches, while the Sermon on the Mount is excluded even from selections from the Bible which are read in churches, so that the congregation never hear it, except on the days when the entire Bible is read. It is inevitable ; the men who can believe that a cruel and unreasonable God had condemned humanity to eternal death and sacrificed his own Son, and who had destined a certain portion of mankind to everlasting torture, cannot believe in a God of love. A man who believes in God, in the Christ who is coming in his glory to judge and punish the dead and the living, cannot believe in a Christ who commands us to turn the other cheek to the offender, who forbids us to sit in judgment, and who bids us to forgive our enemies and to love them. A man who believes in the inspiration of the Old Testament and in the holiness of David, who on his deathbed ordered the murder of an old man who had offended him, and whom he could not kill himself because he was bound by an oath (1 Kings ii. 8, 9), and many other horrors of a similar character, in which the Old Testament abounds, cannot believe in the moral law of Christ ; a man who believes in the doctrine and sermons of the Church, wherein the practice of war and the penalty of death are reconciled with Christianity, cannot believe in the brotherhood of humanity.

But, above all, a man who believes in salvation through faith, in redemption, and in the sacraments, cannot strive with all his might to live up to the moral precepts of Christ. A man who has been taught by the Church the sacrilegious doctrine that he is to be saved through a certain medium, and not by his own efforts, will surely have recourse to that medium ; he will not trust to his own efforts, on which, he has been assured, it is sinful to rely. Every Church, with its doctrines of redemption and salvation, and above all, the Orthodox faith, with its idolatry, excludes the doctrine of Christ. But it is said, " This has always been the faith of the people, and that they will continue to hold it is proved by the whole history of the Russian nation. It would be wrong to deprive them of

their traditions." Herein lies the fallacy. The people, it is true, did once upon a time profess something like what is at present professed by the Church; but besides this worship of images and relics, the people had always a profound moral conception of Christianity never possessed by the Church, and only met with in her noblest representatives; but the people, in the better class, and in spite of the obstacles raised by the State and the Church, have long since abandoned the cruder phase of belief, a fact that is proved by the rationalistic sects that are beginning to spring up on every side, sects that Russia is filled with at the present day, and against which the ecclesiastics wage so hopeless a warfare. The people are beginning to recognize the moral, vital side of Christianity more and more plainly. And now the Church appears, failing to give them a moral support, but forcibly teaching old-time paganism,—the Church, with its immutable formulas, endeavoring to thrust men back into the gloom from which they are struggling so earnestly to escape.

The ecclesiastics say: "We are teaching nothing new; it is the same faith which the people already hold, only we teach it in a more perfect manner." It is like binding a chicken and trying to put it back into the shell from which it came. I have often been struck by the spectacle, which would be simply absurd were not its results so terrible, of men traveling, so to speak, in a circle, deceived and deceiving, but wholly unable to escape from the charmed circle.

The first question, the first doubt, that enters the head of every Russian when he begins to reason, is a suspicion of the miraculous ikons, and principally of the relics: is it true that they are incorruptible, and that they perform miracles? Hundreds and thousands of men ask these questions, and are at a loss for an answer, especially since bishops and metropolitans and other eminent persons kiss both the relics and the miraculous images. Ask the bishops and other personages of importance why they do this, and they will

tell you that they do it in order to impress the masses, and the masses do it because the bishops and other magnates do it.

The activity of the Russian Church, despite the veneer of modernity and the scientific and spiritual standards which its members have begun to establish by their essays, their religious reviews, and their sermons, consists not only in encouraging the people in a coarse and grotesque idolatry, but in strengthening and promulgating superstition and religious ignorance, and in endeavoring to destroy the vital conception of Christianity that exists in the people side by side with this idolatry.

I remember being once in a book-shop of the monastery of Optinæ Desert while an old peasant was selecting spiritual reading for his educated grandson. The monk was offering him a description of relics, of holy days, of miraculous ikons, the Book of Psalms, and the like. I asked the old man if he had a Bible. "No," he replied. "Give him a Russian Bible," I said to the monk. "We don't sell that to them," said the monk. This, in short, is the activity of our Church.

But the European or American reader may say, "That only happens in barbaric Russia," and the remark will be correct, but only so far as it applies to the government, which supports the Church to maintain in our land its stupefying and demoralizing influence.

It is true that there is nowhere in Europe a government so despotic, or that is in more perfect accord with the established Church. Therefore in Russia the government authorities play an important part in demoralizing the people; but it is not true that the Russian Church differs from other churches in respect to its influence over the people.

Churches are everywhere alike, and if the Catholic, Anglican, and Lutheran have not at their beck so submissive a government as the Russian, we may be sure that they would not fail to take advantage of it were it within their reach.

The Church as a church, whether it be Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, or Presbyterian, or any denomination whatsoever, inasmuch as it is a church, cannot help striving after the same object as the Russian Church — namely, to conceal the true meaning of the doctrine of Christ, and to substitute a meaning of its own, which imposes no obligations, which excludes the possibility of understanding the true, living doctrine of Christ, and which above all justifies the existence of a priesthood living at the expense of the people.

Do we not find Catholicism with its prohibition against reading the Bible, and with its demand for implicit obedience to the clergy and the infallible Pope? Wherein does Catholicism differ in its preaching from the Russian Church? The same external worship, the same relics, miracles, and statues, miracle-performing Madonnas and processions; the same vague and mystical utterances concerning Christianity in books and sermons, and all in support of the grossest idolatry.

And is it not the same in the Anglican or in the Lutheran, or in any other Protestant denomination with an established form of church?

The same demands that the congregation shall acknowledge a belief in dogmas which were defined in the fourth century, and which have lost all meaning for the men of our time; the same call for idol worship, if not of relics or ikons, at least of the Sabbath and the letter of the Bible; the same endeavor to conceal the real requirement of Christianity and the substitution of exterior rites, and "cant," as the English so happily define the tendency which finds such sway among them.

This activity is more noticeable in Protestantism, because that creed has not even the excuse of antiquity. And is not the same thing going on in the present "Revivalism," a regenerated Calvinism, which has given birth to the Salvation Army? Inasmuch as the attitude of all ecclesiastical dogmas toward the doctrine of Christ is very much the same, so are their methods of a similar character.

The attitude they have taken obliges them to make every effort to conceal the doctrine of that Christ in whose name they speak.

The disparity between ecclesiastical creeds and the doctrine of Christ is so great that a special effort is required to keep mankind in ignorance. Indeed, one needs but to consider the position of any adult, I do not say educated, but one who has assimilated superficially the current notions concerning geology, physics, chemistry, cosmography, and history, when for the first time he actually reflects on the faith impressed upon him in his childhood, and maintained by the Church, concerning the creation of the world in six days, the appearance of light before the sun was created, the story of Noah's ark and the animals preserved in it, — concerning Jesus and his divine origin as the Son of God who created all things before time existed; that this God came down to earth because of Adam's sin; that he rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; that he will come in the clouds to judge the living and the dead, etc.

All these ideas evolved by the men of the fourth century, which had for them a certain meaning, have none whatever for us. The present generation may repeat these words, but it can never believe in them, because the statements that God dwells in heaven, that the heavens opened and a voice was heard to utter certain words, that Christ arose from the dead and ascended into heaven, that he will come again from some place in the clouds, etc., have no meaning for us.

It was possible for a man who believed that heaven was a substantial arch of limited dimensions to believe or to disbelieve that God created it, that it opened, and that Christ ascended thither, — but for us there is no sense in such ideas. Men of our time can only affirm that it is one's duty to believe all this, — which they do. But they cannot really believe in what has no meaning in it for them.

But if all these utterances are supposed to have an allegorical signification and are only intended as similes,

then we know in the first place that all the churchmen will not agree to this—on the contrary, the majority insist on taking the Scriptures literally; and in the second place, that these interpretations differ greatly, and are supported by no reliable authority.

And even if a man wished to believe the doctrine of the Church as it is taught, the increase of culture, the reading of the Bible, and the intercourse among the members of different churches, form a greater and more insurmountable obstacle to belief.

Nowadays a man has but to buy the Bible for three-pence, and to read the simple, indisputable words of Christ to the Samaritan woman, that the Father seeketh worshipers neither in Jerusalem nor in this or that mountain, but worshipers in spirit and truth; or the words, that a Christian should pray not like the heathen in the temples, nor at the corners of streets, but in the secrecy of his closet; or, that a disciple of Christ may call no one father or mother,—one has but to read these words to be indubitably convinced that priests who call themselves teachers in opposition to the teaching of Christ, and dispute among themselves, cannot be authorities, and that that which they teach is not Christian.

But this is not enough. If the modern man were to go on believing in miracles and never read the Bible, the fellowship with men of other creeds and professions, which is so much a matter of course in these days, will compel him to question the truth of his religion. It was natural enough for a man who had never met a believer in a creed different from his own, to think that his was the only faith; but an intelligent man has but to encounter—and that is an everyday occurrence—good and bad men of all creeds, who criticize each other's beliefs, in order to question the truth of his own religion. Now, only a man either totally ignorant or indifferent to the problems of life as dealt with by religion can remain in the faith of the Church.

What shrewdness is needed, and what efforts must the churches make, in order to go on, in the face of all

these faith-destroying influences, building temples, saying masses, preaching, instructing, converting, and above all receiving for this the large compensations which all those priests, pastors, stewards, superintendents, abbots, archdeacons, bishops, and archbishops receive!

A special and supernatural effort is called for, and to this the Church responds, exerting herself more and more. In Russia, besides many other measures, they employ a simple, rude violence, by virtue of the power invested in the Church. People who shrink from an outward observance of faith and who do not conceal the fact are simply punished or deprived of their civil rights; and to those who strictly comply with the rites, privileges and rewards are granted.

So much for the Orthodoxy; but every church, without exception, makes the most of the means at its disposal, and hypnotism is one of the chief agents.

Every art, from architecture to poetry, is enlisted, in order to move and intoxicate the human soul. This hypnotic and mesmerizing influence is markedly displayed in the activity of the Salvation Army, which employs novel, and to us abnormal, methods, such, for instance, as drums, horns, singing, banners, uniforms, processions, dancing, outbursts of tears, and dramatic gestures.

Still, these methods are startling simply because of their novelty. Is not the familiar form of worship in cathedrals, with their peculiar illumination, the golden pomp, the candles, choirs, organs, bells, vestments, the weeping preachers, etc., of a similar nature? And yet, however powerful may be the influence of this hypnotism, it is by no means the chief or most harmful form which the activity of the Church assumes. Its most malign activity is that which is devoted to deceiving the children — those little ones of whom Jesus has said, "Woe be unto him who tempts the least of these." From the earliest awakening of a child's intelligence he is deceived and formally taught that which his teachers no longer believe themselves, and this goes on until the delusion becomes from habit a part of his nature. A child is systematically deceived concerning the most im-

portant affair in life, and when this deception has become so incorporated with his being that it is difficult to uproot it, then the world of science and reality is opened to him — a world that is wholly at variance with the faith which he has imbibed from his teachers — and he is left to reconcile those contradictions as best he may.

Given the problem of how to muddle a man so that he will be unable to discriminate between two antagonistic conceptions that have been taught to him since his childhood, one could never have devised anything more effectual than the education of every young man in our so-called Christian society.

Shocking as it is to contemplate the work of the churches among men, still, if we consider their position, we shall see that they cannot act otherwise. They are face to face with a dilemma: the Sermon on the Mount or the Nicene creed; the one excludes the other. If a man sincerely believes the Sermon on the Mount, the Nicene creed must inevitably lose all its meaning for him, and the same would hold true as regards the Church and its representatives; but if a man accepts the Nicene creed, that is to say, the Church, or those who call themselves its representatives, then he will find no use for the Sermon on the Mount. Hence it is incumbent on the churches to make every effort to obscure the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount and to endeavor to draw the people toward them. It is only due to their intense activity in that direction that the influence of the churches has not decreased. Let the Church but pause in this effort to influence the masses by hypnotizing men and deceiving children for ever so short a time, and men will comprehend the doctrine of Christ, and this comprehension will do away with churches and their influence. Therefore the churches cease not for one moment their compulsory activity through the hypnotism of adults and the deception of children. And it is this activity of the churches that gives people a false conception of Christ's doctrine, and prevents the majority of men, the so-called believers, from understanding it.

CHAPTER IV

MISCONCEPTION OF CHRISTIANITY BY SCIENTISTS

The relation of scientists to religions in general — What are religions, and their significance to human life — Three conceptions of life — The Christian doctrine is the expression of the divine life-conception — The misconception of Christianity by scientists who study its outward manifestations due to the fact that they consider it from the standpoint of the social life-conception — Opinion resulting therefrom, that the teaching of Christ is exaggerated and unpractical — The expression of the life-conception of the gospel — Erroneous judgments of scientists concerning Christianity are based upon the assurance that they possess an infallible criterion of knowledge — Hence arise two misapprehensions in regard to the Christian doctrine — The first misapprehension concerning the impracticability of the doctrine arises from the fact that the Christian doctrine presents a conduct of life different from that of the social life-conception — Christianity offers not a rule, but an ideal — Christ adds the consciousness of a divine power to that of an animal power — Christianity seems to exclude the possibility of life only when the indication of the ideal is taken for the rule — An ideal cannot be belittled — According to the doctrine of Christ, life is movement — The ideal and the commandments — The second misapprehension arises from the attempt to replace the love of God and His service by the love and service of humanity — Scientists believe that Christianity and their doctrine concerning the service of humanity are identical — The doctrine of love toward humanity has for its foundation the social life-conception — The love for humanity which springs logically from love for the individual has no meaning, because humanity is a fiction — Christian love springing from the love of God has for its object not only humanity but the whole world — Christianity teaches a life in accordance with its divine nature — It indicates that the essence of a man's soul is love, and that its good is obtained from its love of God, whom he feels to be within him through love.

LET us now turn our attention to another fallacious conception of Christianity, which is antagonistic to its actual principles, — the scientific conception.

The Christianity of the churchmen is something which they have evolved for themselves, and which they believe to be the only true interpretation of Christian doctrine.

The scientists take the professions of faith of the various churches for Christianity, and assuming that these dogmas embody an exhaustive definition of Christian doctrine, they affirm that Christianity has had its day.

One needs but to take into consideration the impor-

tant part which all religions, and especially Christianity, have played in the life of man, and the significance which science attaches to them, to see at once how impossible it would be to obtain any just apprehension of Christian doctrine through these conceptions. As each individual must possess certain impressions in regard to the meaning of his life, and, though often unconsciously, conform his conduct thereunto, so mankind in the aggregate, or groups of men living under the same conditions, must likewise possess a conception of the meaning of their common life and its consequent activities. As an individual passing from one period of life to another inevitably changes his ideas, the point of view of a grown-up man differs from that of a child, so also mankind in the aggregate — the nation — inevitably, and in conformity with its age, changes its views of life and the activity that springs therefrom.

The difference in this respect between an individual and mankind in general lies in the fact that while the individual, in forming his conception of the significance and responsibilities of that new period of life upon which he is about to enter, may avail himself of the advice of his predecessors who have already passed that stage, mankind can have no such advantage, because it is advancing along an unbeaten track and there is no one of whom it can ask for the clue to the mystery of life, or how it shall demean itself under these unfamiliar conditions to which no nation has ever yet been subjected.

The married man with a family of children will not continue to view life as he did when he was a child; neither is it possible for mankind, with the many changes that have taken place, — the density of the population, the constant intercourse of nations, the perfected means of combating the forces of nature, and the increase of knowledge generally, — to view the life of the present day in the light of the past; hence it becomes necessary to evolve a life-conception from which activities corresponding with a new system which is to be established will naturally develop.

And this need is supplied by that peculiar capacity of the race for producing men able to impart a new significance to human life,—a significance developing a different set of activities.

The birth of the life-conception, which always takes place when mankind enters upon new conditions and its subsequent activities, is what we call religion.

Therefore, in the first place, religion is not, as science regards it, a phenomenon which formerly traveled hand in hand with the development of mankind, and which has since been left behind; on the contrary, it is a phenomenon inherent to human existence itself, and never more distinctly manifested than at the present day. In the second place, religion defines future rather than past activities; therefore it is evident that an investigation of the phenomena of the past can by no means touch the essence of religion.

The longing to typify the forces of nature is no more the essence of religion than is the fear of those same forces, or the need of the miraculous and its outward manifestations, as the scientists suppose. The essence of religion lies in the power of man to foreknow and to point out the way in which mankind must walk. It is a definition of a new life which will give birth to new activities.

This faculty of foreknowledge concerning the destiny of humanity is more or less common, no doubt, to all people; still from time to time a man appears in whom the faculty has reached a higher development, and these men have the power clearly and distinctly to formulate that which is vaguely conceived by all men, thus instituting a new life-conception from which is to flow an unwonted activity, whose results will endure for centuries to come. Thus far there have been three of these life-conceptions; two of them belong to a bygone era, while the third is of our own time and is called Christianity. It is not that we have merged the various conceptions of the significance of life into three arbitrary divisions, but that there really have been but three distinct conceptions, by which the actions of mankind

have been influenced, and save through these we have no means of comprehending life.

These three life-conceptions are — firstly, the individual or animal; secondly, the social or pagan; and thirdly, the universal or divine.

According to the first of these, a man's life is his personality, and that only, and his life's object is to gratify his desires. According to the second, his life is not limited to his own personality; it includes the sum and continuity of many personalities, — of the family, of the race, and of the State, and his life's object is to gratify the will of the communities of individuals. And according to the third, his life is confined neither to his personality nor to that of the aggregate of individuals, but finds its significance in the eternal source of all life, — in God Himself.

These three life-conceptions serve as the basis for the religions of every age.

The savage sees life only through the medium of his own desires. He cares for nothing but himself, and for him the highest good is the full satisfaction of his own passions. The incentive of his life is personal enjoyment. His religion consists of attempts to propitiate the gods in his favor, and of the worship of imaginary deities, who exist only for their own personal ends.

A member of the pagan world recognizes life as something concerning others besides himself; he sees it as concerning an aggregate of individuals, — the family, the race, the nation, the State, and is ready to sacrifice himself for the aggregate. The incentive of his life is glory. His religion consists in honoring the chiefs of his race, his progenitors, his ancestors, his sovereigns, and in the worship of those gods who are the exclusive patrons of his family, his tribe, his race, and his State.¹

¹ The unity of this social and pagan life-conception is by no means destroyed by the numerous and varied systems which grow out of it, such as the existence of the family, of the nation, and of the State, and even of that life of humanity conceived according to the theory of the Positivists.

These multifarious systems of life are based upon the fundamental idea

The man who possesses the divine life-conception neither looks upon life as centered in his own personality nor in that of mankind at large, whether family, tribe, race, nation, or State; but rather does he conceive of it as taking its rise in the eternal life of God, and to fulfil His will he is ready to sacrifice his personal, family, and social well-being. Love is the impelling motive of his life, and his religion is the worship, in deed and in truth, of the beginning of all things, — of God Himself.

History is but the transcript of the gradual transition from the animal life-conception of the individual to the social, and from the social to the divine. The history of the ancients for thousands of centuries, culminating in that of Rome, is the history of the evolution from the animal life-conception of the individual to that of society and the State. From the advent of Christianity and the fall of Imperial Rome we have the history of that change which is still going on from the social to the divine life-conception.

The latter, together with the Christian doctrine which is based upon it, and by which our lives are shaped, and our activities, both practical and scientific, are quickened, is regarded by the pseudo-scientists, who judge it only by its outward signs, as something outlived, which has lost all meaning for us.

According to scientists this doctrine is embodied in the dogmas of the Trinity, the Redemption, the miracles, the Church and its sacraments, etc., and is only one of the many religions which have arisen during the progress of human history, and now, having played its part and outlived its time, is vanishing before the dawn of science and true enlightenment.

The grossest of human errors spring in most cases from the fact that men who stand on a low intellectual plane, when they encounter phenomena of a higher order, instead of trying to rise to the higher plane from which these phenomena may be fitly regarded, and making an

of the insignificance of the individual, and the assurance that the meaning of life is to be sought and found only in humanity, taken in its broadest sense. — AUTHOR.

effort to understand them, judge them by their own low standard, and the less they know of what they speak, the more bold and determined are their judgments.

Most scientists, who treat of the moral doctrine of Christ from the lower standpoint of a social life-conception, regard it as nothing more than an amalgam without cohesion of the asceticism of India with the doctrine of the Stoics and Neo-Platonists, and of vague anti-social dreams, devoid of all serious meaning in these latter days; they simply see its outward manifestation in the form of dogmas in Catholicism, in Protestantism, and in its struggle with the powers of the world. Interpreting the design of Christianity from its outward aspects, they are like unto deaf men, who judge of the meaning and excellence of music by the movements of the musicians.

Hence it is that all such men, from Comte and Strauss to Spencer and Renan, not understanding the purport of Christ's words, knowing nothing whatever of their intention, ignorant of the question to which they serve as an answer, and taking no pains to learn it, — such men, if they are inimical to Christianity, utterly deny the sense of the doctrine; but if they are leniently inclined, then, from the height of their superior wisdom, they amend it, taking for granted that Christ would have said what they think He meant, had He known how to express himself. They treat His doctrine just as men of overweening self-conceit treat their inferiors, correcting them in their speech: "You mean so and so." And the spirit of emendation is always such as to reduce the doctrine of the higher, the divine life-conception, to that of the lower and the social conception.

It is usually admitted that the moral teaching of Christianity is good but exaggerated; that in order to make it perfect, its hyperboles, which are incompatible with our present mode of life, should be discarded. "A doctrine which requires so much that is impracticable is more hurtful than one which demands of men only what is in proportion to their strength." Thus declare the learned interpreters of Christianity, thus unwittingly reiterating the assertion of those who misunderstood the

Christian doctrine long years ago, and crucified the Master.

The Hebrew law, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," the retributive justice known to mankind thousands of years ago, seems far better suited to the court of contemporary scientists than the law of love which Christ preached 1800 years ago, and which was to replace this identical law of justice.

It would seem that every action of those men who accepted the teaching of Christ in its literal sense, and lived up to it, all the words and deeds of sincere Christians, and all the agencies which, under the guise of socialism and communism, are now transforming the world, are merely exaggeration, not worth discussing. Nations which have lived under Christian influences, and which are now represented by their advanced thinkers, the scientists, have arrived at the conclusion that the Christian doctrine is a matter of dogma; that its practical teaching has been a mistake and an exaggeration, inimical to the just requirements of morality that are in accord with human nature, and that the very doctrine which Christ repudiated, and for which he substituted a dogma of his own, is far better suited to us. The scientist considers the commandment of non-resistance to evil by violence an exaggeration, and even an act of folly. It would be far better, in his opinion, to reject it, never dreaming that it is not the doctrine of Christ which he is controverting, but something which he assumes to be the doctrine in question. He does not realize when he says that the commandment of non-resistance in the doctrine of Christ is an exaggeration, that he is like one who, teaching the theory of the circle, declares that the equality of the radii is an exaggeration. It is just as if one who has no idea of the form of a circle were to affirm that the law which requires that each point of its circumference shall be equidistant from its center, is an exaggeration. As a suggestion to reject or modify the proposition concerning the equality of the radii of a circle signifies an ignorance in regard to the circle itself, so also does the idea of rejecting or modifying, in the

practical teaching of Christ, the commandment of non-resistance to evil by violence signify a misunderstanding of the doctrine.

And those who entertain these views do not really comprehend the doctrine. They do not understand that it is the unfolding of a new conception of life, corresponding to the new phase of existence upon which the world entered 1800 years ago, and a definition of the new activity to which it gave birth. Either they do not believe that Christ said what He meant to say, or that what is found in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere He said either from His enthusiasm or lack of wisdom and simplicity of character.¹

Matt. vi. 25-34. — 25. *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*

26. *Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*

27. *Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?*

¹ Here, for example, is a characteristic expression of opinion in the American periodical, *The Arena*, for November, 1890, from an article entitled "New Basis of Church Life." Discussing the significance of the Sermon on the Mount, and especially the doctrine of non-resistance to evil, the author, having no reason for obscuring its meaning as the ecclesiastics do, says:—

"Devout common sense must gradually come to look upon Christ as a philanthropic teacher, who, like every enthusiast who ever taught, went to an Utopian extreme in his own philosophy. Every great agitation for the betterment of the world has been led by men who beheld their own mission with such absorbing intensity that they could see little else. It is no reproach to Christ to say that he had the typical reformer's temperament; that his precepts cannot be literally accepted as a complete philosophy of life; and that men are to analyze them reverently, but, at the same time, in the spirit of ordinary truth-seeking criticism," etc.

"Christ did in fact preach absolute communism and anarchy; but," and so on. Christ would have been glad to have expressed Himself in more fitting terms, but He did not possess our critical faculty in the use of exact definitions, therefore we will set Him right. All He said concerning meekness, sacrifice, poverty, and of taking no thought for the morrow, were but haphazard utterances, because of His ignorance of scientific phraseology.

28. *And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:*

29. *And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

30. *Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*

31. *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

32. *(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

33. *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

34. *Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

Luke xii. 33-34.—33. *Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.*

34. *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* Matt. xix. 21.—“*Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.*”

Mark viii. 34.—“*Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*”

John iv. 34.—“*My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*”

Luke xxii. 42.—“*Not my will, but thine, be done.*”

Not what I wish, but what Thou wishest, and not as I wish, but as Thou wishest. Life consists in doing not your own will, but the will of God.

All these doctrines are regarded by men who adhere to the lower life-conception as expressions of enthusiastic exaltation, with no special reference to daily life. And yet these doctrines are no less the natural outcome of the Christian life-conception than is the idea of giving one's labor for the common good, or of sacrificing one's life to defend one's country, the outcome of the social life-conception.

As the believer in the social life-conception says to the savage: "Rouse yourself! Consider what you are doing! The life that man lives for himself alone cannot be the true one, for life is fleeting and full of woe. It is the life of the community at large, the race, the family, the State, that endures: therefore a man must sacrifice his personality for the life of the family and the State;" Christianity in like manner says unto him who believes in a social life-conception of the community: "Repent, μετανοετα, that is, arouse yourself, consider your ways, else shall you perish. Know you that this bodily, animal life is born to-day and dies to-morrow; nothing can assure its permanence, no outward expedients, no system whatsoever can give it stability. Consider your ways and learn that the life you live is not the real life, that neither family, social, nor State life will save you from perdition. An honest rational life is possible for man provided that he be, not a participant of the life of the family or life of the State, but a partaker of the source of all life — that of the Father Himself; then his life is united to the life of the Father." Such is beyond a doubt the meaning of the Christian conception of life, clearly set forth in every maxim of the New Testament.

One may not share such a conception of life, one may deny it, or prove it to be inaccurate and fallacious; but no man can possibly judge a doctrine without having first made himself familiar with the life-conception which forms its basis; and still more impossible is it to judge a lofty subject from a low standpoint, to pronounce upon the belfry from a knowledge of the foundation. Yet this is precisely what is done by contemporary scientists. And this is because they are laboring under an error similar to that of the clergy, in believing that they possess such infallible methods of studying their subject that, if they but bring their so-called scientific methods to bear upon the subject under consideration, there can be no doubt as to the accuracy of their conclusion.

The possession of a guide to knowledge, which they believe to be infallible, is really the chief obstacle to the

comprehension of the Christian doctrine among unbelievers and so-called scientists, by whose opinions the great majority of unbelievers, the so-called educated classes, are guided. All the errors of the scientists concerning Christianity, and especially two strange misapprehensions that avail more than anything else to blind men to its real signification, arise therefrom.

One of these misapprehensions is that the doctrine of a Christian life not being practical, it remains optional with the individual whether he take it for his guide or no; and if he chooses to do so, it may then be modified to suit the exigencies of our social life. The second misapprehension is that the Christian doctrine of love of God, and therefore of the service due to Him, is a mystical requirement, neither clearly expressed nor offering any well-defined object of love: consequently the more definite and intelligible doctrine of love of man and of the service of humanity may be substituted for it.

The first misapprehension which relates to the impracticability of the Christian doctrine arises from the fact that men who believe in the social life-conception, not comprehending the rule obeyed by men who hold the Christian doctrine, and mistaking the Christian standard of perfection for the guiding principle of life, believe and declare that it is impossible to follow the teaching of Christ, because implicit obedience to this doctrine would end by destroying life. "If man were to fulfil the precepts of Christ, he would destroy his life; and if all the world were to fulfil them, the human race would soon become extinct. If you were to take no thought for the morrow, neither of what ye shall eat or drink, nor what ye shall put on; if one may not resist evil by violence or defend one's life, nor even give up one's life for his friend; if one is to preserve absolute chastity, mankind could not long exist;" so they believe and affirm.

And they are right, if one takes the incentives to perfection offered by the teaching of Christ as laws which each man must obey, just as, for instance, in the social order every man must pay his taxes, and some must serve in the courts of law, and so on.

The misapprehension consists in overlooking the fact that the doctrine of Christ, and the doctrine formulated by a lower life-conception, guide men in very different ways. The doctrines of the social life-conception guide men in fulfilling the requirements of the law. The doctrine of Christ guides men by manifesting the infinite perfection of the Heavenly Father, to which it is natural for every man to aspire, whatever may be his shortcomings.

The misconception of those who judge the Christian doctrine by the standard of the state or civil doctrine is this, — that they imagine that the perfection of which Christ speaks may be attained in this life, and ask themselves just as they would ask concerning some law of the State, what will happen when all this shall be fulfilled? This hypothesis is fallacious, because the perfection indicated by Christianity is infinite and can never be attained; and Christ promulgates his doctrine, knowing that although absolute perfection will never be attained, yet the aspiration toward it will ever contribute to the welfare of mankind, that this welfare may by this means be everlastingly increased.

Christ is not teaching angels, but men who live and move in an animal life, and whose impulses are of an animal nature. And to this animal impulse Christ, so to speak, adds another force by communicating to man a sense of the divine perfection, guiding the current of life between these two forces.

To take it for granted that human life is to follow the direction indicated by Christ would be like expecting the boatman, who, crossing a swift river, steers almost directly against the current, to float in that direction.

Christ recognizes the fact that a parallelogram has two sides, and that a man's life is controlled by two indestructible forces: his animal nature and his consciousness of a filial relationship to God. Disregarding the factor of the animal life, which never looses its hold, and is beyond man's control, Christ speaks of the divine consciousness, urging man to its fuller recognition, its complete emancipation from all that fetters it, and to its utmost development.

Man's true life, according to the precepts of Christ, is only to be found in this emancipation and in the growth of the divine consciousness. According to the old dispensation, a true life meant the fulfilment of the precepts of the law; but according to Christ, it means the closest approach to the divine perfection which has been manifested to every man, and which every man recognizes, — a closer and closer union of his will to the will of God; a union which every man is striving to attain, and which would utterly destroy the life we now lead.

God's perfection is the asymptote of human life, toward which it is forever aspiring and drawing nearer, although it can only reach its goal in the infinite.

It is only when men mistake the suggestion of an ideal for a rule of conduct that the Christian doctrine seems at odds with life. Indeed, the reverse is true, for it is by the doctrine of Christ, and that alone, that a true life is rendered possible. "It is a mistake to require too much," men usually say, when discussing the demands of the Christian religion. "One ought not to be required to take no thought for the morrow, as the Bible teaches, but of course one should not be over-anxious; one cannot give all that he possesses to the poor, still he should bestow a certain portion of his goods in charity; one ought not to remain unmarried, but let him avoid a dissolute life; one need not renounce his wife and children, although one must not idolize them."

These arguments are equivalent to telling a man who is crossing a swift river and steering his boat against the current, that no one can cross a river by steering against the current, but that he must direct his boat in a straight line toward the point he wishes to reach.

The doctrine of Christ differs from former doctrines in that it influences men, not by outward observances, but by the interior consciousness that divine perfection may be attained.

It is this illimitable and divine perfection that absorbs the soul of man, not restricted laws of justice and philanthropy. It needs but the aspiration toward this

divine perfection to impel the course of human life from the animal to the divine, so far as may be humanly possible.

In order to land at any given point one must steer beyond it. To lower the standard of an ideal means not only to lessen the chances of attaining perfection, but to destroy the ideal itself. The ideal that influences mankind is not an ingenious invention; it is something that dwells in the soul of each individual. It is this ideal of utter and infinite perfection that excites men and urges them to action. A possible degree of perfection would have no appeal to the souls of men.

It is because the doctrine of Christ requires illimitable perfection, that is to say, the blending of the divine essence, which is in each man's soul, with the will of God, the union of the Son with the Father, that it has authority. It is only the emancipation of the Son of God, who dwells with each one of us, from the animal element within us, and the drawing near to the Father, that can, in the Christian sense of the word, be called life.

The presence of the animal element in man is not enough of itself to constitute human life. Neither is a spiritual life, which is guided only by the will of God, a human life. A true human life is composed of an animal and of a spiritual life united to the will of God, and the nearer this component life approaches to the life of God, the more it has life.

According to the Christian doctrine, life is a condition of progress toward the perfection of God; hence no one condition can be either higher or lower than another, because each is in itself a certain stage in human progress toward the unattainable perfection, and therefore of equal importance with all the others. Any spiritual quickening, according to this doctrine, is simply an accelerated movement toward perfection. Therefore the impulse of Zacchæus the publican, of the adulteress, and the thief on the cross, show forth a higher order of life than does the passive righteousness of the Pharisee. This doctrine, therefore, can never be

enforced by obligatory laws. The man who, from a lower plane, lives up to the doctrine he professes, ever advancing toward perfection, leads a higher life than one who may perhaps stand on a superior plane of morality, but who is making no progress toward perfection.

Thus the stray lamb is dearer to the Father than those which are in the fold; the prodigal returned, the coin that was lost and is found again, more highly prized than those that never were lost.

Since the fulfilment of this doctrine is an impulse from self toward God, it is evident that there can be no fixed laws for its movement. It may spring from any degree of perfection or of imperfection; the fulfilment of rules and fulfilment of the doctrine are by no means synonymous; there could be no rules or obligatory laws for its fulfilment.

The difference between social laws and the doctrine of Christ is the natural result of the radical dissimilarity between the doctrine of Christ and those earlier doctrines which had their source in a social life-conception. The latter are for the most part positive, enjoining certain acts, by the performance of which men are to be justified and made righteous, whereas the Christian precepts (the precept of love is not a commandment in the strict sense of the word, but the expression of the very essence of the doctrine), the five commandments of the Sermon on the Mount, are all negative, only meant to show men who have reached a certain degree of development what they must avoid. These commandments are, so to speak, mile-stones on the infinite road to perfection, toward which humanity is struggling; they mark the degrees of perfection which it is possible for it to attain at a certain period of its development.

In the Sermon on the Mount Christ expressed the eternal ideal to which mankind instinctively aspires, showing at the same time the point of perfection to which human nature in its present stage may attain.

The ideal is to bear no malice, excite no ill-will, and to love all men. The commandment which forbids us

to offend our neighbor is one which a man who is striving to attain this ideal must not do less than obey. And this is the first commandment.

The ideal is perfect chastity in thought, no less than in deed; and the commandment which enjoins purity in married life, forbidding adultery, is one which every man who is striving to attain this ideal must not do less than obey. And this is the second commandment.

The ideal is to take no thought for the morrow, to live in the present, and the commandment, the fulfilment of which is the point beneath which we must not fall, is against taking oath or making promises for the future. Such is the third commandment.

The ideal — to use no violence whatsoever — shows us that we must return good for evil, endure injuries with patience, and give up the cloak to him who has taken the coat. Such is the fourth commandment.

The ideal is to love your enemies, to do good to them that despitefully use you. In order to keep the spirit of this commandment one must at least refrain from injuring one's enemies, one must speak kindly of them, and treat all one's fellow-creatures with equal consideration. Such is the fifth commandment.

All these commandments are reminders of that which we, in our striving for perfection, must and can avoid; reminders, too, that we must labor now to acquire by degrees habits of self-restraint, until such habits become second nature. But these commandments, far from exhausting the doctrine, do not by any means cover it. They are but stepping-stones on the way to perfection, and must necessarily be followed by higher and still higher ones, as men pursue the course toward perfection.

That is why a Christian doctrine would make higher demands than those embodied in the commandments, and not in the least decrease its demands, as they who judge the Christian doctrine from a social life-conception seem to think.

This is one of the mistakes of the scientists in regard to the significance of Christ's doctrine. And the substi-

tution of the love of humanity for the love and service of God is another, and it springs from the same source.

In the Christian doctrine of loving and of serving God, and (as the natural consequence of such love and service) of loving and serving one's neighbor, there seems to the scientific mind a certain mysticism, something at once confused and arbitrary; and, believing that the doctrine of love for humanity rests on a firmer basis and is altogether more intelligible, they utterly reject the requirement of love and service of God.

The theory of a scientist is that a virtuous life, a life with a purpose, must be useful to the world at large; and in a life of this kind they discover the solution of the Christian doctrine, to which they reduce Christianity itself. Assuming their own doctrine to be identical with that of Christianity, they seek and believe that they find in the latter an affirmation of their own views.

This is a fallacy. The Christian doctrine, and the doctrine of the Positivists, and of all advocates of the universal brotherhood of man, founded on the utility of such a brotherhood, have nothing in common, and especially do they differ in that the doctrine of Christianity has a solid and a clearly defined foundation in the human soul, whereas love of humanity is but a theoretical conclusion reached through analogy.

The doctrine of the love of humanity has for its basis the social life-conception.

The essence of the social life-conception consists in replacing the sense of individual life by that of the life of the group. In its first steps, this is a simple and natural progression, as from the family to the tribe; from the family to the race is more difficult, and requires special education,—which has arrived at its utmost limits when the State has been reached.

It is natural for every man to love himself, and he needs no incentive thereto; to love his tribe, which lends both support and protection; to love his wife, the delight and comfort of his daily life; the children, who are his consolation and his future hope; his parents, who gave him life and cherished him,—all this, al-

though not so intense as love of self, is natural and common to mankind.

To love one's race, one's people, for their own sake, although not so instinctive, is also common. To love one's ancestors, one's kinsfolk, through pride, is also natural and frequent; and a man may feel love for his fellow-countrymen, who speak the same language and profess the same faith as himself, although the emotion is less strong than love of self or love of family. But love for a nation, Turkey, for instance, or Germany, England, Austria, Russia, is almost impossible, and notwithstanding the training given in that direction, it is only a fictitious semblance; it has no real existence. At this aggregate ceases man's power of transfusing his innermost consciousness; for such a fiction he can feel no direct sentiment. And yet the Positivists and all the preachers of the scientific fraternity, not taking into consideration the fact that this feeling is weakened in proportion to the expansion of its object, continue to theorize on the same lines. They say: "If it were to the advantage of an individual to transfuse his consciousness into the family, and thence into the nation and the State, it follows that it will be to his further advantage to transfuse his consciousness into the universal entity, mankind, that all men may live for humanity, as they have lived for the family and for the State."

And theoretically they are right.

After having transferred the consciousness and love for the individual to the family, and from the family to the race, the nation, and the State, it would be perfectly logical for men, in order to escape the strife and disasters that result from the division of mankind into nations and states, to transfer their love to humanity at large. This would appear to be the logical outcome, and it has been offered as a theory by those who forget that love is an innate sentiment, which can never be inspired by preaching; that it must have a real object, and that the entity which men call humanity is not a real object, but a fiction.

A family, a race, even a State, are no inventions of

men; these things have formed themselves like a hive of bees, or a colony of ants, and possess an actual existence. The man who loves his family, after a human fashion, knows whom he is loving — Ann, Maria, John, or Peter. The man who loves his ancestors, and is proud of them, knows that he loves the Guelphs, for instance, or the Ghibellines; the man who loves his country knows that he loves France from the Rhine to the Pyrenees, that he loves its capital, Paris, and all its history. But the man who loves humanity, what is it that he loves? There is a State, there is a people, there is the abstract conception of man. But humanity as a concrete conception is impossible.

Humanity? Where is its limit? Where does it end and where does it begin? Does it exclude the savage, the idiot, the inebriate, the insane? If one were to draw a line of demarcation so as to exclude the lower representatives of the human race, where ought it to be drawn? Ought it to exclude the Negro, as they do in the United States, or the Hindoos, as some Englishmen do, or the Jews, as does another nation? But if we include all humanity without exception, why should we restrict ourselves to men? Why should we exclude the higher animals, some of whom are superior to the lowest representatives of the human race?

We do not know humanity in the concrete, nor can we fix its limits. Humanity is a fiction, and therefore it cannot be loved. Indeed, it would be advantageous if men could love humanity as they love the family. It would be very useful, as the communists say, to substitute a community of interests for individual competition, or the universal for the personal; in a word, to make the whole world a mutual benefit society, — only that there are no motives to bring about such a result. The Positivists, communists, and all the exponents of the scientific fraternity exhort us to extend the love which men feel for themselves, their families, their fellow-countrymen, over humanity at large, forgetting that the love of which they speak is a personal love, which may be kindled for the family, and even extend to include

one's native country, but which expires altogether when it is appealed to in behalf of an artificial state, such as Austria, England, or Turkey; and when claimed for that mystical object, humanity in general, one cannot even grasp the idea.

"A man loves himself, his physical personality, he loves his family, he even loves his country. Why should he not also love mankind? It would seem such a happy consummation! And it so happens that Christianity inculcates the same precept." These are the opinions of the Positivist, the communist, and the socialist fraternities.

It would indeed be fortunate, but it is impossible, because love founded on a personal and social life-conception can go no further than the love of country.

The flaw in the argument arises from the fact that the social life-conception, the basis of family love and of patriotism, is itself an individual love, and such a love, in its transference from a person to a family, a race, a nation, and a State, gradually loses its efficiency, and in the State has reached its final limit, and can go no further.

The necessity for widening the sphere of love is not to be denied, and yet it is the very attempt to satisfy this requirement that destroys its possibility, and proves the inadequacy of personal human love.

And here it is that the advocates of the Positivist, communist, and socialist brotherhood offer as a prop to the humanitarianism that has proved its inefficiency, a Christian love, not in its essence, but only in its results; in other words, not the love of God, but the love of man.

But there can be no such love; it has no *raison d'être*. Christian love comes only from a Christian life-conception, whose sole manifestation is the love and service of God.

By a natural sequence in the extension of love from the individual to the family, and thence to the race, the nation, and the State, the social life-conception has brought men not to the consciousness of love for hu-

manity, — which is illimitable — the unification of every living creature, — but to a condition which evokes no feeling in man, to a contradiction for which it provides no reconciliation.

It is only the Christian doctrine which, by lending to human life a new significance, is able to solve the difficulty. Christianity presents the love of self and the love of the family, as well as patriotism and the love of humanity, but it is not to be restricted to humanity alone; it is to be given to every living creature; it recognizes the possibility of an indefinite expansion of the kingdom of love, but its object is not to be found outside itself, in the aggregate of individuals, neither in the family, nor in the race, nor in the State, nor in mankind, nor all the wide world, but in itself, in its personality, — a divine personality, whose essence is the very love which needed a wider sphere.

The distinction between the Christian doctrine and those which preceded it may be thus defined. The social doctrine says: Curb thy nature (meaning the animal nature alone); subject it to the visible law of the family, of society, and of the State. Christianity says: Live up to thy nature (meaning the divine nature); make it subject to nothing; neither to thine own animal nature, nor to that of another, and then thou shalt attain what thou seekest by subjecting thine outward personality to visible laws. The Christian doctrine restores to man his original consciousness of self, not the animal self, but the godlike self, the spark of divinity, as the son of God, like unto the Father, but clothed in a human form. This consciousness of one's self as a son of God, whose essence is love, satisfies at once all those demands made by the man who professes the social life-conception for a broader sphere of love. Again, in the social life-conception the enlargement of the domain of love was a necessity for the salvation of the individual; it was attached to certain objects, to one's self, to one's family, to society, and to humanity. With the Christian world-conception love is not a necessity, neither is it attached to any special object; it is the inherent quality

of a man's soul; he loves because he cannot help loving.

The Christian doctrine teaches to man that the essence of his soul is love; that his well-being may be traced, not to the fact that he loves this object or that one, but to the fact that he loves the principle of all things — God, whom he recognizes in himself through love, and will by the love of God love all men and all things.

This is the essential difference between the Christian doctrine and that of the Positivists, and all other non-Christian theorists of a universal brotherhood.

Such are the two chief misapprehensions in regard to the Christian doctrine, and from those most of the false arguments on the subject have originated.

One is, that the doctrine of Christ, like the doctrines which preceded it, promulgates rules which men must obey, and that these rules are impracticable. The other, that the whole meaning of Christianity is contained in the doctrine of a coöperative union of mankind, in one family, to attain which, leaving aside the question of love of God, one should obey only the rule of love of one's fellow-men.

Finally, the mistake of scientists, in supposing that the doctrine of the supernatural contains the essence of Christianity, that its life-teaching is not practicable, together with the general misapprehensions that result from such a misconception, further explains why men of our time have so misunderstood Christianity.

CHAPTER V

CONTRADICTION OF OUR LIFE AND CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS

Men consider that they may accept Christianity without changing their life — The pagan life-conception no longer corresponds to the present age of humanity, which the Christian life-conception alone can satisfy — The Christian life-conception is still misunderstood by men, but our life itself necessitates its acceptance — The requirements of a new life-conception always seem unintelligible, mystical, and supernatural — Such, for the majority of men, seem the requirements of the Christian

life-conception — The acceptance of a Christian life-conception will inevitably be accomplished both through spiritual and material agencies — The fact that men, conscious of a higher life-conception, continue to entertain the lower forms of life, causes contradiction and suffering, which embitter life and require its alteration — Contradictions of our life — The economical contradiction, and the suffering it causes to the working-men and to the rich — The contradiction of State, and the sufferings that arise from obedience to State laws — The international contradiction, and its acknowledgment by contemporary writers: Komarovsky, Ferri, Booth, Passy, Lawson, Wilson, Bartlett, Defourny, Moneta — The military contradiction the extreme.

MANY causes have contributed toward the misunderstanding of the teaching of Christ. One of these is that men assumed to understand the doctrine, when, like the faithful of the Church, they accepted the statement that it had been transmitted in a supernatural manner; or, like the scientists, after having investigated certain of its outward manifestations. Another reason may be found in the conviction that it is impracticable, and that it may be replaced by the doctrine of love of humanity. But the principal reason of all such misconceptions is that men look upon the doctrine of Christ as one that may be accepted or rejected without any special change in one's life.

Men, attached by habit to the existing order, shrink from attempting to change it, hence they agree to consider this doctrine as a mass of revelations and laws that may be accepted without making any change in one's life: whereas the doctrine of Christ is not a doctrine of rules for man to obey, but unfolds a new life-conception, meant as a guide for men who are now entering upon a new period, one entirely different from the past.

The life of humanity continues its course and has its stages, like the life of an individual; each age has its own life-conception, which a man must adopt whether he will or no. Those who do not adopt it consciously, adopt it unconsciously. The same change that takes place in the views of the individual, as life goes on, occurs also in the existence of nations and of humanity in general.

If a father were to conduct his affairs like a child, his life would certainly become so unbearable that he would

cast about for a different plan of life, and would eagerly grasp at one better suited to his years.

And the human race is at the present time passing through a similar experience, in its transition from a pagan to a Christian life-conception. A man of the society of the present day finds that the pagan life-conception is no longer suited to the times, hence he is induced to submit to the requirements of the Christian religion, whose truths, however misunderstood and falsely interpreted they may be, are yet familiar to his ears, and seem to offer the only practical solution of the contradictions that beset his path. If the demands of the Christian doctrine seem unintelligible, peculiar, and dangerous to a man who has hitherto held the social life-conception, the demands of the latter seemed none the less so to a savage of a previous age, who neither fully apprehended them, nor was able to foresee their consequences.

The savage reasoned thus: "It would be folly for me to sacrifice my peace or my life to defend an incomprehensible, intangible, and uncertain ideal, family, race, country, and, above all, it would be dangerous to deliver myself into the hands of an unknown power." But there came a time in the life of the savage when, on the one hand, he had begun, although vaguely, to understand the meaning of social life, as well as that of its chief incentive, — social approval or condemnation: glory, — while, on the other hand, the sufferings of his personal life had become so severe that it was no longer possible for him to go on believing in the truth of his former life-conception; whereupon he accepted the social and State doctrine and submitted to its laws.

And he who holds the social life-conception is now undergoing a similar experience.

"It is madness" — thus reasons the man holding such views — "to sacrifice one's interests or those of one's family and of one's country, in order to fulfil the requirements of a law that would compel one to renounce the most natural and praiseworthy feelings toward one's self, one's family, and one's country, and,

above all, the guarantee of protection afforded by the State."

But there comes a time when, on the one hand, a vague awakening consciousness stirs the soul, the consciousness of the higher law, love of God and one's neighbor, and the sufferings a man endures from the contradictions of life, compel him to renounce the social life-conception and to adopt the new Christian life-conception which is offered him. And this time has now arrived.

To us, who underwent the transition from the individual to the social life-conception thousands of years ago, this transition appears to have been both natural and inevitable, just as the present transition, through which we have been passing these last 1800 years, seems arbitrary, unnatural, and overwhelming. But it seems so for the simple reason that the former change is a thing of the past, and has fixed in us certain habits, whereas we are still practically accomplishing the present transition, and have to accomplish it consciously.

It was centuries, indeed thousands of years, before the social life-conception was adopted by all mankind; it passed through various phases, and we ourselves possess it through heredity, education, and unconscious habit; hence it seems natural to us. But 5000 years ago it seemed as strange and unnatural to men as the Christian doctrine in its true meaning seems to them now.

The universal brotherhood of man, the equality of races, the abolition of property, the anomalous doctrine of non-resistance, all these requirements of the Christian religion seem to us impossibilities. But in olden times, thousands of years ago, not only the requirements of the State, but even those of the family, as, for instance, the obligation of parents to feed their children, of children to support their aged parents, and that of conjugal fidelity, seemed equally impossible. And still more unreasonable seemed the demands of the State, requiring citizens to submit to established authority, to pay taxes, to perform military duty in defense of their country, etc. We find no difficulty in comprehending these

requirements now; they seem perfectly simple and natural, with nothing mystical or alarming in their aspect; but five or even three thousand years ago, such demands seemed intolerable.

Thus the social life-conception served as a foundation for religion, for at the time when it was first manifested to men it seemed to them to be utterly incomprehensible, mystical, and supernatural. Now that we have passed that phase of human life, we can understand the reasons for the aggregation of men into families, communities, and states. But in the early ages the demand for these aggregations was made in the name of the supernatural, and its fulfilment assured by the same authority.

The patriarchal religion deified the family, the race, the people. State religions deified the sovereigns and the State. Even at the present day the uneducated masses, the Russian peasants, for instance, who call the Czar a God upon earth, obey the laws from religious instinct, not because their reason counsels them to do so, nor because they have the least idea of a State.

And to those men of our own times who hold the social life-conception, the Christian doctrine seems to be a supernatural religion, whereas in reality there is nothing mystical or supernatural about it; it is only a doctrine concerning human life, corresponding with the degree of development which man has attained, and one which he cannot refuse to accept.

The time will come, and it is already near at hand, when the Christian foundations of life — equality, brotherly love, community of goods, non-resistance of evil by violence — will seem as natural and simple as the foundations of family, social, and State life appear to us at the present time.

There can be no retrogression for humanity. Men have outgrown the lower life-conception of the family and the State, and must press forward to embrace the next higher conception, as they have already begun to do.

This movement is accomplished in two ways: con-

sciously, by moral causes; unconsciously, by material ones. It rarely happens that a man changes his mode of life at the dictates of reason; however conscious he may be of the new design and purpose revealed to him by his reason, he goes on in the old fashion until his life has become intolerably inconsistent, and therefore distressing. Likewise, the larger portion of mankind, after learning through its religious teachers a new conception of life and its objects, to which it has yet to adjust itself, will for a long time pursue its wonted course, and only make the change in the end because its former life has become impossible.

In spite of the necessity for a change of life, acknowledged and proclaimed by our religious guides and admitted by the wisest men, in spite of the religious respect entertained for these guides, the majority of men continue to be influenced in life, now additionally complicated, by their former views. It is as if the father of a family, knowing well enough how to conduct himself properly, should through force of habit or thoughtlessness continue to live as if he were still a child.

At this very moment we are experiencing one of these transitions. Humanity has outgrown its social, its civic age, and has entered upon a new epoch. It knows the doctrine that must underlie the foundations of life in this new epoch; but, yielding to inertia, it still clings to its former habits. From this inconsistency between the theory of life and its practice follow a series of contradictions and sufferings that embitter man's life and compel him to make a change.

One needs but to compare the practice of life with its theory to be horrified at the extraordinary contradictions between the conditions of life and our inner consciousness.

Man's whole life is a continual contradiction of what he knows to be his duty. This contradiction prevails in every department of life, in the economical, the political, and the international. As though his intelligence were forgotten and his faith temporarily eclipsed,—for he must have faith, else would his life have no perma-

nence,—he acts in direct opposition to the dictates of his conscience and his common sense.

In our economical and international relations we are guided by the fundamental principles of bygone ages,—principles quite contradictory to our mental attitude and the conditions of our present life.

It was right for a man who believed in the divine origin of slavery, and in its necessity, to live in the relation of a master to his slaves. But is such a life possible in these days? A man of antiquity might believe himself justified in taking advantage of his fellow-man, oppressing him for generations, merely because he believed in diversity of origin, noble or base, descent from Ham or Japheth. Not only have the greatest philosophers of ancient times, the teachers of mankind, Plato and Aristotle, justified the existence of slavery and adduced proofs of its legality, but no longer than three centuries ago those who described an ideal state of society could not picture it without slaves.

In ancient times, and even in the Middle Ages, it was honestly thought that men were not born equal, that the men worthy of respect were only Persians, only Greeks, only Romans, or only Frenchmen; but no one believes it now. And the enthusiastic advocates of the principles of aristocracy and patriotism at this present day cannot believe in their own statements.

We all know, and cannot help knowing, even if we had never heard it defined and never attempted to define it ourselves, that we all possess an inherent conviction deep in our hearts of the truth of that fundamental doctrine of Christianity, that we are all children of one Father, yea, every one of us, wheresoever we may live, whatsoever language we may speak; that we are all brothers, subject only to the law of love implanted in our hearts by our common Father.

Whatever may be the habits of thought or the degree of education of a man of our time, whether he be an educated liberal, whatsoever his shade of opinion, a philosopher, whatsoever may be his system, a scientist, an economist of any of the various schools, an unedu-

cated adherent of any religious faith,—every man in these days knows that in the matter of life and worldly goods all men have equal rights; that no man is either better or worse than his fellow-men, but that all men are born free and equal. Every man has an instinctive assurance of this fact, and yet he sees his fellow-beings divided into two classes, the one in poverty and distress, which labors and is oppressed, the other idle, tyrannical, luxurious; and not only does he see all this, but, whether voluntarily or otherwise, he falls in line with one or the other of these divisions,—a course repugnant to his reason. Hence he must suffer both from his sense of the incongruity and his own share in it.

Whether he be master or slave, a man in these days is forever haunted by this distressing inconsistency between his ideal and the actual fact, nor can he fail to perceive the suffering that springs therefrom.

The masses—that is to say, the majority of mankind, who suffer and toil, their lives dull and uninteresting, never enlivened by a ray of brightness, enduring numberless privations—are those who recognize most clearly the sharp contrasts between what is and what ought to be, between the professions of mankind and their actions.

They know that they work like slaves, that they are perishing in want and in darkness, that they may minister to the pleasures of the minority. And it is this very consciousness that enhances its bitterness; indeed, it constitutes the essence of their suffering.

A slave in old times knew that he was a slave by birth, whereas the working-man of our day, while he feels himself to be a slave, knows that he ought not to be one, and suffers the tortures of Tantalus from his unsatisfied yearning for that which not only could be granted him, but which is really his due. The sufferings of the working-classes that spring from the contradictions of their fate are magnified tenfold by the envy and hatred which are the natural fruits of the sense of these contradictions.

A working-man in our period, even though his work may be less fatiguing than the labor of the ancient slave, and even were he to succeed in obtaining the eight-hour system and twelve-and-sixpence a day, still has the worst of it, because he manufactures objects which he will never use or enjoy ; — he is not working for himself ; he works in order to gratify the luxurious and idle, to increase the wealth of the capitalist, the mill-owner, or manufacturer. He knows that all this goes on in a world where men acknowledge certain propositions such as the economic principle that labor is wealth, that it is an act of injustice to employ another man's labor for one's own benefit, that an illegal act is punishable by law, in a world, moreover, where the doctrine of Christ is professed, — that doctrine which teaches us that all men are brothers, and that it is the duty of a man to serve his neighbor and to take no unfair advantage of him.

He realizes all this, and must suffer keenly from the shocking contradiction between the world as it should be and the world as it is. "According to what I am told and what I hear men profess," says a working-man to himself, "I ought to be a free man equal to any other man, and loved ; I am a slave, hated and despised." Then he in his turn is filled with hatred, and seeks to escape from his position, to overthrow the enemy that oppresses him, and to get the upper hand himself.

They say : "It is wrong for a workman to wish himself in the place of a capitalist, or for a poor man to envy the rich." But this is false. If this were a world where God had ordained masters and slaves, rich and poor, it would be wrong for the working-man or the poor man to wish himself in the place of the rich : but this is not so ; he wishes it in a world which professes the doctrine of the gospel, whose first principle is embodied in the relation of the son to the Father, and consequently of fraternity and equality. And however reluctant men may be to acknowledge it, they cannot deny that one of the first conditions of Christian life is love, expressed, not in words, but in deeds.

The man of education suffers even more from these inconsistencies. If he has any faith whatever he believes, perhaps, in fraternity, — at least in the sentiment humanity ; and if not in the sentiment humanity, then in justice ; and if not in justice, then surely in science ; and he cannot help knowing all the while that the conditions of his life are opposed to every principle of Christianity, humanity, justice, and science.

He knows that the habits of life in which he has been bred, and whose abandonment would cause him much discomfort, can only be supported by the weary and often suicidal labor of the down-trodden working-class — that is, by the open infraction of those principles of Christianity, humanity, justice, and even of science (political science), in which he professes to believe. He affirms his faith in the principles of fraternity, humanity, justice, and political science, and yet the oppression of the working-class is an indispensable factor in his daily life, and he constantly employs it to attain his own ends in spite of his principles ; and he not only lives in this manner, but he devotes all his energies to maintain a system which is directly opposed to all his beliefs.

We are brothers : but every morning my brother or my sister performs for me the most menial offices. We are brothers : but I must have my morning cigar, my sugar, my mirror, or what not, — objects whose manufacture has often cost my brothers and sisters their health, yet I do not for that reason forbear to use these things ; on the contrary, I even demand them. We are brothers : and yet I support myself by working in some bank, commercial house, or shop, and am always trying to raise the price of the necessities of life for my brothers and sisters. We are brothers : I receive a salary for judging, convicting, and punishing the thief or the prostitute, whose existence is the natural outcome of my own system of life, and I fully realize that I should neither condemn nor punish. We are all brothers : yet I make my living by collecting taxes from the poor, that the rich may live in luxury and idleness. We are brothers : and yet I receive a salary for preaching a

pseudo-Christian doctrine, in which I do not myself believe, thus hindering men from discovering the true one; I receive a salary as priest or bishop for deceiving people in a matter which is of vital importance to them. We are brothers: but I make my brother pay for all my services, whether I write books for him, educate him, or prescribe for him as a physician. We are all brothers: but I receive a salary for fitting myself to be a murderer, for learning the art of war, or for manufacturing arms and ammunition and building fortresses.

The whole existence of our upper classes is utterly contradictory, and the more sensitive a man's nature the more painful is the incongruity.

A man with a sensitive conscience can enjoy no peace of mind in such a life. Even supposing that he succeeds in stifling the reproaches of his conscience, he is still unable to conquer his fears.

Those men and women of the dominant classes who have hardened themselves, and have succeeded in stifling their consciences, must still suffer through their fear of the hatred they inspire. They are quite well aware of its existence among the laboring classes; they know that it can never die; they know, too, that the workingmen realize the deceits practised upon them, and the abuses that they endure; that they have started organizations to throw off the yoke, and to take vengeance on their oppressors. The happiness of the upper classes is poisoned by fear of the impending calamity, foreshadowed by the unions, the strikes, and First of May demonstrations. Recognizing the calamity that threatens them, their fear turns to defiance and hatred. They know that if they relax for one moment in this conflict with the oppressed, they are lost, because their slaves, already embittered, grow more and more so with every day's oppression. The oppressors, though they may see it, cannot cease to oppress. They realize that they themselves are doomed from the moment they abate one jot of their severity. So they go on in their career of oppression, notwithstanding their affectation of inter-

est in the welfare of the working-men, the eight-hour system, the laws restricting the labor of women and children, the pensions, and the rewards. All this is mere pretense, or at best the natural anxiety of the master to keep his slave in good condition; but the slave remains a slave all the while, and the master, who cannot live without the slave, is less willing than ever to set him free. The governing classes find themselves in regard to the working-men very much in the position of one who has overthrown his opponent, and who holds him down, not so much because he does not choose to let him escape, but because he knows that should he for one moment lose his hold on him, he would lose his own life, for the vanquished man is infuriated, and holds a knife in his hand.

Hence our wealthy classes, whether their consciences be tender or hardened, cannot enjoy the advantages they have wrung from the poor, as did the ancients, who were convinced of the justice of their position. All the pleasures of life are poisoned either by remorse or fear.

Such is the economic inconsistency. Still more striking is that of the civil power.

A man is trained first of all in habits of obedience to state laws. At the present time every act of our lives is under the supervision of the State, and in accordance with its dictates a man marries and is divorced, rears his children, and in some countries accepts the religion it prescribes. What is this law, then, that determines the life of mankind? Do men believe in it? Do they consider it true? Not at all. In most cases they recognize its injustice, they despise it, and yet they obey it. It was fit that the ancients should obey their law. It was chiefly religious, and they sincerely believed it to be the only true law, to which all men owed obedience. Is that the case with us? We cannot refuse to acknowledge that the law of our State is not the eternal law, but only one of the many laws of many states, all equally imperfect, and frequently wholly false and unjust, — a law that has been openly discussed in all its aspects by

the public press. It was fit that the Hebrew should obey his laws, since he never doubted that the finger of God Himself had traced them; or for the Roman, who believed that he received them from the nymph Egeria; or even for those peoples who believed that the rulers who made the laws were anointed of God, or that legislative assemblies have both the will and the ability to devise laws as good as possible. But we know that laws are the offspring of party conflicts, false dealing, and the greed of gain, that they are not, and can never be, the depository of true justice; and therefore it is impossible for people of the present day to believe that obedience to civil or state laws can ever satisfy the rational demands of human nature. Men have long since realized that there is no sense in obeying a law whose honesty is more than doubtful, and therefore they must suffer when, though privately denying its prerogative, they still conform to it. When a man's whole life is held in bondage by laws whose injustice, cruelty, and artificiality he plainly discerns, and yet is compelled to obey these laws under penalty of punishment, he must suffer; it cannot be otherwise.

We recognize the disadvantages of custom-houses and import duties, but we are yet obliged to pay them; we see the folly of supporting the court and its numerous officials, we admit the harmful influence of church preaching, and still we are compelled to support both; we also admit the cruel and iniquitous punishments inflicted by the courts, and yet we play our part in them; we acknowledge that the distribution of land is wrong and immoral, but we have to submit to it; and despite the fact that we deny the necessity for armies or warfare, we are made to bear the heavy burden of supporting armies and waging war.

These contradictions, however, are but trifling in comparison with the one which confronts us in the problem of our international relations, and which cries aloud for solution, since both human reason and human life are at stake, and this is the antagonism between the Christian faith and war.

We, Christian nations, whose spiritual life is one and the same, who welcome the birth of every wholesome and profitable thought with joy and pride, from whatsoever quarter of the globe it may spring, regardless of race or creed; we, who love not only the philanthropists, the poets, the philosophers, and the scientists of other lands; we, who take as much pride in the heroism of a Father Damien as if it was our own; we, who love the French, the Germans, the Americans, and the English, not only esteeming their qualities, but ready to meet them with cordial friendship; we, who not only would be shocked to consider war with them in the light of an exploit, — when we picture to ourselves the possibility that at some future day a difference may arise between us that can only be reconciled by murder, and that any one of us may be called upon to play his part in an inevitable tragedy, — we shudder at the thought.

It was well enough for a Hebrew, a Greek, or a Roman to maintain the independence of his country by murder, and even to subdue other nations by the same means, because he firmly believed himself a member of the one favored people beloved by God, and that all the others were Philistines and barbarians. Also, in the times of the Middle Ages men might well have held these opinions, and even they who lived toward the end of the last century and at the beginning of this. But we, whatever provocation may be offered us, we cannot possibly believe as they did; and this difficulty is so painful for us in these times that it has become impossible to live without trying to solve it.

“We live in a time replete with contradictions,” writes Count Komarovsky, the Professor of International Law, in his learned treatise. “Everywhere the tone of the public press seems to indicate a general desire for peace, and shows the need of it for all nations. And the representatives of the government, in their private as well as in their public capacity, in parliamentary speeches and diplomatic negotiations, express themselves in the same temper. Nevertheless, the governments increase the military force year after year, impose new taxes,

negotiate loans, and will leave as a legacy to future generations the responsibilities of the present mistaken policy. How are the word and the deed at variance!

"By way of justification the governments claim that all their armaments and the consequent outlay are simply defensive in their character, but to the uninitiated the question naturally suggests itself: Whence is to come the attack if all the great powers are devoting themselves to a *defensive policy*? It certainly looks as if each one of them lived in hourly expectation of attack from his neighbor, and the consequence is a strife between the different governments to surpass each other in strength. The very existence of this spirit of rivalry favors the chances of war: the nations, no longer able to support the increased armament, will sooner or later prefer open war to the tension in which they live and the ruin which menaces them, so that the slightest pretext will avail to kindle in Europe the conflagration of a general war. It is a mistake to suppose that such a crisis will heal the political and economic ills under which we groan. The experience of late wars shows us that each one served only to exacerbate the animosity of the nations against each other, to increase the unbearable burden of military despotism, and has involved the political and economic situation of Europe in a more melancholy and pitiable plight than ever."

"Contemporary Europe keeps under arms nine millions of men," says Enrico Ferri, "and a reserve force of fifteen millions, at a cost of four milliards of francs a year. By increasing its armament it paralyzes more and more the springs of social and individual welfare, and may be compared to a man who, in order to obtain weapons, condemns himself to anæmia, thereby depriving himself of the strength to use the weapons he is accumulating, whose weight will eventually overpower him."

The same idea has been expressed by Charles Booth, in his address delivered in London, July 26, 1887, before the Association for the Reform and Codification of National Laws. Having mentioned the same numbers, — over nine millions in active service and fifteen millions

in reserve, and the enormous sums required to support these armies and armaments, — he says, in substance: "These numbers represent but a small part of the actual expenditure, because outside of the expenses enumerated in the budgets of the nations we must take into consideration the great losses to society from the removal of so many able-bodied men, lost to industry in all its branches, and moreover, the interest on the enormous sums spent in military preparations, which yield no returns. As might be expected, the constantly increasing national debts are the inevitable result of these outlays in preparation for war. By far the greater proportion of the debt of Europe has been contracted for munitions of war. The sum total is four milliards of pounds, or forty milliards of roubles, and these debts are increasing every year."

Komarovsky, whom we lately quoted, says elsewhere: "We are living in hard times. Everywhere we hear complaints of the stagnation of commerce and industry, and of the wretched economical situation. They tell us of the hard conditions of life among the laboring classes and the general impoverishment of the people. But regardless of this, governments, determined to maintain their independence, go to the utmost limits of folly. Additional taxes are levied on every side, and the financial oppression of the people knows no bounds. If we glance at the budgets of European states for the last hundred years, we shall be struck with their constantly increasing figures. How can we explain this abnormal condition that sooner or later threatens to overwhelm us with inevitable bankruptcy?"

"Most assuredly it is caused by the expense of maintaining armies, which absorbs one-third, or even one-half, of the budget of all European nations. The saddest part of it, however, is that there is no end to this increase of budgets and consequent impoverishment of the masses. What is socialism but a protest against the abnormal situation in which the majority of mankind of our continent finds itself?"

"We are being ruined," says Frédéric Passy, in a

paper read before the last Peace Congress in London (1890), "to enable us to take part in the senseless wars of the future, or to pay the interest of debts left us by the criminal and insane wars and contests of the past. We shall perish with hunger, to have success in murder."

Going on to speak of the opinion of France in regard to this matter, he says: "We believe that now, a hundred years after the proclamation formulating the belief in the rights of men and citizens, the time has come to declare the rights of nations and to repudiate once and for all time those undertakings of fraud and violence, which, under the name of conquests, are actually crimes against humanity, and which, however much the pride of nations or the ambition of monarchs may seek to justify them, serve only to enervate the conquerors."

"I am always very much surprised at the way religion is carried on in this country," says Sir Wilfred Lawson before the same Congress. "You send a boy to the Sunday-school, and you tell him: 'My dear boy, you must love your enemies; if any boy strikes you, don't strike him again; try to reform him by loving him.' Well, the boy goes to the Sunday-school till he is fourteen or fifteen years of age, and then his friends say, 'Put him in the army.' What has he to do in the army? Why, not love his enemies, but whenever he sees an enemy, to run him through the body with a bayonet is the nature of all religious teaching in this country. I do not think that that is a very good way of carrying out the precepts of religion. I think if it is a good thing for the boy to love his enemy, it is a good thing for the man to love his enemy."

And later!

"In Europe great Christian nations keep among them 28,000,000 of armed men to settle quarrels by killing one another, instead of by arguing. This is what the Christian nations of the world are doing at this moment. It is a very expensive way also; for in a publication which I saw—I believe it was correct—it was made out that since the year 1812 these nations had spent the almost incredible amount of 1,500,000,000

of money in preparing and settling their quarrels by killing one another. Now it seems to me that with that state of things one of two positions must be accepted, — either that Christianity is a failure, or that those who profess to expound Christianity have failed in expounding it properly."

"So long as our men-of-war are not disarmed and our army not disbanded, we have no right to be called a Christian nation," said Mr. F. L. Wilson.

In a conversation in regard to the duty of Christian ministers in the matter of preaching against war, Mr. G. D. Bartlett remarked, among other things:—

"If I understand the Scriptures, I say that men are only playing with Christianity when they ignore this question. I have lived a long life, I have heard many sermons, and I can say without any exaggeration that I never heard universal peace recommended from the pulpit half a dozen times in my life. Some twenty years ago I happened to stand in a drawing-room where there were forty or fifty people, and I dared to make the proposition that war was incompatible with Christianity. They looked upon me as an arrant fanatic. The idea that we could get on without war was regarded as unmitigated weakness and folly."

A Catholic priest, the Abbé Defourny, has spoken in a similar spirit. "One of the first commandments of the eternal law, engraved in every man's conscience," says the Abbé Defourny, "forbids a man to take his neighbor's life or shed his blood" (without sufficient cause, being forced to it by stress of circumstance). "This is a commandment more deeply engraved in the human heart than all the others. But as soon as it becomes a question of war, that is, a question of the wholesale shedding of human blood, men in these days do not wait for a sufficient cause. Those who are active in war forget to ask themselves if there is any justification for the numerous manslaughters that take place, whether they are just or unjust, legal or illegal, innocent or criminal, or whether they break the principal law that forbids us to commit murder" (without just cause). "Their

conscience is silent. War has ceased to be a matter connected with morality. The soldier, amid all the fatigues and dangers he undergoes, knows no joy but conquest, no sorrow but defeat. Don't tell me that they serve the country. A great genius has long ago answered this statement in words that have since become a proverb: 'Take away justice, and what is then a nation but a great band of robbers? And is not a band of robbers in itself a small state? They, too, have their laws. They, too, fight for booty, and even honor.'

"The aim of this organization" (it was a question of establishing international tribunals) "is to influence the European nations until they cease to be nations of thieves, and their armies bands of robbers. Yes, our armies are nothing less than a rabble of slaves belonging to one or two monarchs and their ministers, who, as we all know, rule them tyrannically and without any responsibility other than nominal, as we know.

"It is the characteristic of a slave that he is a tool in the hands of his master. Such are the soldiers, officers, and generals, who at the beck of their sovereign go forth to slay or to be slain. There is a military slavery, and it is the worst of all slaveries, particularly now, when by means of conscription it forges chains for the necks of all the free and strong men of the nation, in order to use them as instruments of murder, to make them executioners and butchers of human flesh, since that is the sole reason why they are drafted and drilled.

"Two or three potentates in their cabinets make treaties, without protocols, without publicity, and therefore without responsibility, sending men to the slaughter.

"'Protests against increased armaments began before our time,' said Signor E. G. Moneta. Listen to Montesquieu: 'France' (for France we might now substitute Europe) 'is perishing from an overgrown army. A new disease is spreading throughout Europe. It has affected kings, and obliges them to maintain an incredible number of troops. It is like a rash, and therefore contagious; for no sooner does one nation increase its troops

than all the others follow suit. Nothing can result from this condition of affairs but general calamity.

“‘Each government maintains as many troops as it would require if its people were threatened with destruction, and this state of tension is called peace. Europe is in truth ruined. If private individuals were reduced to such straits as these, the richest man among them would be practically destitute. The wealth of the world and its commerce are in our hands, and yet we are poor.’

“This was written almost 150 years ago. It seems like a picture of the present. One thing alone has changed—the form of government. In the time of Montesquieu it was said that the reason for the maintenance of large armies might be found in the unlimited power of kings, who carried on war in the hope of increasing their private property and their glory.

“Then it was said: ‘Ah! if the people could but choose representatives who would have a right to refuse the governments when they called for soldiers and money—there would be an end of a military policy.’ Now, almost everywhere in Europe there are representative governments, and still the military expenditure in preparation for war has increased in frightful proportion.

“It looks as though the folly of the rulers had passed into the ruling classes. Now they no longer fight because one king has been rude to another king’s mistress, as in the time of Louis XIV., but by exaggerating the importance of national dignity and patriotism,—emotions which are natural and honorable in themselves,—and exciting the public opinion of one country against the other, until they have arrived at such a pitch of sensitiveness that it is enough to say, for instance (even were the report to prove false), one country has refused to receive the ambassador of another, to precipitate the most frightful and disastrous war. Europe maintains under arms at the present time more soldiers than were in the field during the great wars of Napoleon. Every citizen on our continent, with a few exceptions, is forced to spend several years in the barracks. Fortresses, arsenals, men-of-war are built, new firearms are invented,

which in a short time are replaced by others, because science, which should always be devoted to the promotion of human welfare, contributes, it must be regretfully acknowledged, to human destruction, inventing ever new means of killing greater numbers of men in the shortest possible time.

"In these stupendous preparations for slaughter, and in the maintenance of these vast numbers of troops, hundreds of millions are yearly expended — sums that would suffice to educate the masses, and to carry on the most important works of public improvement, thereby contributing toward a perfect solution of the social problem.

"Therefore, notwithstanding all our scientific victories, Europe finds herself in this respect not one whit better off than she was in the most barbarous times of the Middle Ages. Every one laments a state of things which is neither war nor peace, and longs to be delivered from it. The heads of governments emphatically affirm that they desire peace, and eagerly emulate each other in their pacific utterances, but almost immediately thereafter they propose to the legislative assemblies measures for increasing the armament, asserting that they take these precautions for the preservation of peace.

"But this is not the sort of peace we care for, and the nations are not deceived by it. True peace has for its foundation mutual confidence, whereas these appalling armaments show, if not a declared hostility, at least a secret distrust among the different nations. What should we say of a man who, wishing to show his friendly feelings to his neighbor, should invite him to consider a certain scheme, holding a loaded pistol while he unfolds it before him?

"It is this monstrous contradiction between the assurances of peace and the military policy of the governments, that good citizens wish to put an end to, at any cost."

One is amazed to learn that there are 60,000 suicides reported in Europe, not including Turkey and Russia, every year, and these are all well-substantiated cases;

but it would be far more remarkable if the number were less. Any man in these times who investigates the antagonism between his convictions and his actions, finds himself in a desperate plight. Setting aside the many other contradictions between actual life and conviction which abound in the life of a man of the present day, to view the military situation in Europe in the light of its profession of Christianity is enough to make a man doubt the existence of human reason, and drive him to escape from a barbarous and insane world by putting an end to his own life. This inconsistency, which is the very quintessence of all the others, is so shocking, that one can only go on living and taking any part in it, by dint of trying not to think about it, — to forget it all.

What can it mean? We are Christians, who not only profess to love one another, but are actually leading one common life; our pulses beat in harmony; we meet each other in love and sympathy, deriving support and counsel from our mutual intercourse. Were it not for this sympathy life would have no meaning. But at any moment some demented ruler may utter a few rash words, to which another gives reply, and lo! I am ordered to march at the risk of my life, to slay those who have never injured me, whom I really love. And it is no remote contingency, but an inevitable climax for which we are all preparing ourselves.

Fully to realize this is enough to drive one to madness and to suicide, and this is but too common an occurrence, especially among soldiers.

A moment's reflection shows us why this seems an inevitable conclusion.

It explains the frightful intensity with which men plunge into all kinds of dissipation, — wine, tobacco, cards, newspaper reading, travel, all manner of shows and pleasures. They pursue all these amusements in deadly earnest, as if they were serious avocations, as indeed they are. If men possessed none of these distractions, half of them would kill themselves out of hand, for to live a life that is made up of contradictions is simply unbear-

able, and such is the life that most of us lead at the present day. We are living in direct contradiction to our inmost convictions. This contradiction is evident both in economic and in political relations; it is manifested most unmistakably in the inconsistency of the acknowledgment of the Christian law of brotherly love and military conscription, which obliges men to hold themselves in readiness to take each other's lives, — in short, every man to be at once a Christian and a gladiator.

CHAPTER VI

ATTITUDE OF MEN OF THE PRESENT DAY TOWARD WAR

Men do not endeavor to destroy the contradiction between life and consciousness by a change of life, but educated men use all their power to stifle the demands of consciousness and to justify their lives, and thus degrade society to a condition worse than pagan, to a state of primeval savagery — Uncertainty of the attitude of our leading men toward war, universal armament, and general military conscription — Those who regard war as an accidental political phenomenon easily to be remedied by external measures — The Peace Congress — Article in the *Revue des Revues* — Proposition of Maxime du Camp — Significance of Courts of Arbitration and Disarmament — Relations of governments to these, and the business they pursue — Those who regard war as a cruel inevitable phenomenon — Maupassant — Rod — Those who regard it as indispensable, even useful — Camille Doucet, Claretie, Zola, Vogüé.

THE contradictions of life and of consciousness may be solved in two ways: by change of life, or by change of consciousness; and it would seem as if there could be no hesitation in a choice between the two.

When a man acknowledges a deed to be evil he may refrain from the deed itself, but he can never cease to regard it as evil. Indeed, the whole world might cease from evil-doing, and yet have no power to transform, or even to check for a season, the progress of knowledge in regard to that which is evil, and which ought not to exist. One would think that the alternative of a change of life to accord with consciousness might be settled without question, and that it would therefore seem unavoida-

ble for the Christian world of the present day to abandon those pagan forms which it condemns, and regulate its life by the Christian precepts which it acknowledges.

Such would be the result were it not for the principle of inertia (a principle no less unalterable in human life than in the world of matter), which finds its expression in the psychological law defined in the gospel by the words: "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John iii. 19). Most persons, in conformity to this principle, do not use their reason in order to ascertain the truth, but rather to persuade themselves that they possess it, and that their daily life, which is pleasant for them, is in harmony with the precepts of truth.

Slavery conflicted with all the moral principles taught by Plato and Aristotle, and yet neither of them perceived this, because the disavowal of slavery must have destroyed that life by which they lived. And the same thing is repeated in our times.

The division of mankind into two classes, the existence of political and military injustice, is opposed to all those moral principles which our society professes, and yet the most progressive and cultivated men of the age seem not to perceive this.

Almost every educated man at the present day is striving unconsciously to preserve the old-time conception of society, which justifies his attitude, and to conceal from others and from himself its inconsistencies, chief among which is the necessity of adopting the Christian ideal, which is subversive of the very structure of our social existence. It is this antiquated social system, in which they no longer believe, because it is really a thing of the past, that men are trying to uphold.

Contemporary literature, philosophical, political, and artistic, — all contemporary literature affords a striking proof of the truth of my statement. What wealth of imagination, what form and color, what erudition and art, but what a lack of serious purpose, what reluctance to face any exact thought! Ambiguity of expression,

indirect allusion, witticisms, vague reflection, but no straightforward or candid dealing with the subject they treat of, namely, life.

Indeed, our writers treat of obscenities and improprieties; in the guise of refined paradox they convey suggestions which thrust men back to primeval savagery, to the lowest dregs, not only of pagan life, but animal life, which we outlived 5000 years ago. Delivering themselves from the Christian life-conception, which for some simply interferes with the accustomed current of their lives, while for others it interferes with certain advantages, men must of necessity return to the pagan life-conception and to the doctrines to which it gave rise. Not only are patriotism and the rights of the aristocracy preached at the present time as they used to be 2000 years ago, but also the coarsest epicureanism and sensuality, with this difference only,—that the teachers of old believed in the doctrines they taught, whereas those of the present day neither do nor can possess any faith in what they utter, because there is no longer any sense in it. When the ground is shifting under our feet, we cannot stand still, we must either recede or advance. It sounds exaggerated to say that the enlightened men of our time, the advanced thinkers, are speciously degrading society, plunging it into a condition worse than pagan,—into a state of primeval barbarism.

In no other matter has this tendency of the leading men of our time been so plainly shown as in their attitude toward that phenomenon in which at present all the inconsistency of social life is concentrated,—toward war, universal armament, and military conscription.

The equivocal, if not unscrupulous, attitude of the educated men of our time toward this question is a striking one. It may be stated from three points of view. Some regard this phenomenon as an accidental state of affairs, which has sprung from the peculiar political situation of Europe, and believe it to be susceptible of adjustment by diplomatic and international

mediation, without injury to the structure of nations. Others look upon it as something appalling and cruel, fatal yet unavoidable,—like disease or death. Still others, in cold blood, calmly pronounce war to be an indispensable, salutary, and therefore desirable event.

Men may differ in their views in regard to this matter, but all discuss it as something with which the will of the individuals who are to take part in it has nothing whatever to do; therefore they do not even admit the natural question which presents itself to most men; viz., "Is it my duty to take part in it?" In the opinion of these judges there is no reason in such a question, and every man, whatever may be his personal prejudices in regard to war, must submit in this matter to the demands of the ruling powers.

The attitude of those in the first category, who expect deliverance from war by means of diplomatic and international mediation, is well defined in the results of the London Peace Congress, and in an article, together with letters concerning war from prominent writers, which may be found in the *Revue des Revues* (No. 8, 1891).

These are the results of the Congress.

Having collected from all parts of the globe the opinions of scientists, both written and oral, the Congress, opening with a *Te Deum* in the cathedral, and closing with a dinner and speeches, listened for five days to numerous addresses, and arrived at the following conclusions:—

Resolution I. The Congress affirms its belief that the brotherhood of man involves as a necessary consequence a brotherhood of nations, in which the true interests of all are acknowledged to be identical. The Congress is convinced that the true basis for an enduring peace will be found in the application by nations of this great principle in all their relations one to another.

II. The Congress recognizes the important influence which Christianity exercises upon the moral and political progress of mankind, and earnestly urges upon ministers of the gospel and other teachers of religion and morality the duty of setting forth these principles

of Peace and Good-will, which occupy such a central place in the teaching of Jesus Christ, of philosophers and of moralists, and *it recommends that the third Sunday in December in each year be set apart for that purpose.*

III. The Congress expresses its opinion that all teachers of history should call the attention of the young to the grave evils inflicted on mankind in all ages by war, and to the fact that such war has been waged, as a rule, for most inadequate causes.

IV. The Congress protests against the use of military drill in connection with the physical exercises of schools, and suggests the formation of brigades for saving life rather than any of quasi-military character; and it urges the desirability of impressing on the Board of Examiners, who formulate the questions for examination, the propriety of guiding the minds of children into the principles of Peace.

V. The Congress holds that the doctrine of the universal rights of man requires that aboriginal and weaker races shall be guarded from injustice and fraud when brought into contact with civilized peoples, alike as to their territories, their liberties, and their property, and that they shall be shielded from the vices which are so prevalent among the so-called advanced races of men. It further expresses its conviction that there should be concert of action among the nations for the accomplishment of these ends. The Congress desires to express its hearty appreciation of the conclusions arrived at by the late Anti-Slavery Conference, held in Brussels, for the amelioration of the condition of the peoples of Africa.

VI. The Congress believes that the warlike prejudices and traditions which are still fostered in the various nationalities, and the misrepresentations by leaders of public opinion in legislative assemblies, or through the press, are not infrequently indirect causes of war. The Congress is therefore of opinion that these ends should be counteracted by the publication of accurate statements and information that would tend to the removal of mis-

understanding amongst nations, and recommends to the Inter-Parliamentary Committee the importance of considering the question of starting an international newspaper, which should have such a purpose as one of its primary objects.

VII. The Congress proposes to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference that the utmost support should be given to every project for the unification of weights and measures, of coinage, tariffs, postal and telegraphic arrangements, means of transport, etc., which would assist in constituting a commercial, industrial, and scientific union of the peoples.

VIII. In view of the vast moral and social influence of woman, the Congress urges upon every woman throughout the world to sustain, as wife, mother, sister, or citizen, the things that make for peace, as otherwise she incurs grave responsibilities for the continuance of the systems of war and militarism, which not only desolate but corrupt the home-life of the nation. To concentrate and to practically apply this influence, the Congress recommends that women should unite themselves with societies for the promotion of international peace.

IX. This Congress expresses the hope that the Financial Reform Association and other similar societies in Europe and America should unite in convoking at an early date a conference to consider the best means of establishing equitable commercial relations between States by the reduction of import duties as a step toward Free Trade. The Congress feels that it can affirm that the whole of Europe desires Peace, and is impatiently waiting for the moment when it shall see the end of those crushing armaments which, under the plea of defense, become in their turn a danger, by keeping alive mutual distrust, and are, at the same time, the cause of the general economic disturbance which stands in the way of settling in a satisfactory manner the problems of labor and poverty, which should take precedence of all others.

X. This Congress, recognizing that a general disarmament would be the best guarantee of *Peace*, and

would lead to the solution, in the general interest, of those questions which now must divide States, expresses the wish that a Congress of Representatives of all the States of Europe may be assembled as soon as possible to consider the means of effecting a gradual general disarmament, which already seems feasible.

XI. This Congress, considering that the timidity of a single Power or other cause might delay indefinitely the convocation of the above-mentioned Congress, is of the opinion that the Government which should first dismiss any considerable number of soldiers would confer a signal benefit on Europe and mankind, because it would oblige other Governments, urged on by public opinion, to follow its example, and by the moral force of this accomplished fact would have increased rather than diminished the conditions of its national defense.

XII. This Congress, considering the question of disarmament, as well as the Peace question generally, depends upon public opinion, recommends the Peace Societies here represented, and all friends of Peace, to carry on an active propaganda among the people, especially at the time of Parliamentary elections, in order that the electors should give their votes to those candidates who have included in their programme Peace, Disarmament, and Arbitration.

XIII. This Congress congratulates the friends of Peace on the resolution adopted by the International American Conference (with the exception of the representatives of Chili and Mexico) at Washington in April last, by which it was recommended that arbitration should be obligatory in all controversies concerning diplomatic and consular privileges, boundaries, territories, indemnities, right of navigation, and the validity, construction, and enforcement of treaties, and in all other causes, whatever their origin, nature, or occasion, except only those which, in the judgment of any of the nations involved in the controversy, may imperil its independence.

XIV. This Congress respectfully recommends this resolution to the statesmen of Europe, and expresses

the ardent desire that treaties in similar terms be speedily entered into between the other nations of the world.

XV. This Congress expresses its satisfaction at the adoption by the Spanish Senate, on June 18th last, of a project of law authorizing the Government to negotiate general or special treaties of arbitration for the settlement of all disputes, except those relating to the independence and internal government of the States affected; also at the adoption of resolutions to a like effect by the Norwegian Storting on March 6th last, and by the Italian Chamber on July 11th.

XVI. That a committee of five be appointed to prepare and address communications, in the name of the Congress, to the principal religious, political, economical, labor, and peace organizations in civilized countries, requesting them to send petitions to the governmental authorities of their respective countries, praying that measures be taken for the formation of suitable tribunals for the adjudication of international questions, so as to avoid the resort to war.

XVII. Seeing (1) that the object pursued by all Peace Societies is the establishment of juridical order between nations:

(2) That neutralization by international treaties constitutes a step toward this juridical state, and lessens the number of districts in which war can be carried on:

This Congress recommends a larger extension of the rule of neutralization, and expresses the wish:—

(1) That all treaties which at present assure to certain States the benefit of neutrality remain in force, or, if necessary, be amended in a manner to render the neutrality more effective, either by extending neutralization to the whole of the State, of which a part only may be neutralized, or by ordering the demolition of fortresses, which constitute rather a peril than a guarantee for neutrality.

(2) That new treaties, provided that they are in harmony with the wishes of the populations concerned, be

concluded for establishing the neutralization of other States.

XVIII. The Committee Section proposes :—

(1) That the next Congress be held immediately before or immediately after the next session of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference, and at the same places.

(2) That the question of an international Peace Emblem be postponed *sine die*.

(3) The adoption of the following resolutions :—

(a) Resolved, that we express our satisfaction at the formal and official overtures of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, addressed to the highest representatives of each church organization in Christendom, inviting the same to unite with itself in a general conference, the object of which shall be to promote the substitution of international arbitration for war.

(b) That this Congress, assembled in London from the 14th to the 19th July, desires to express its profound reverence for the memory of Aurelio Salfi, the great Italian jurist, a member of the Committee of the International League of Peace and Liberty.

(4) That the memorial to the various heads of the civilized States adopted by this Congress, and signed by the President, should, so far as practicable, be presented to each Power by an influential deputation.

(5) That the Organization Committee be empowered to make the needful verbal emendations in the papers and resolutions presented.

(6) That the following resolutions be adopted :—

(a) A resolution of thanks to the Presidents of the various sittings of the Congress.

(b) A resolution of thanks to the chairman, the secretary, and the members of the Bureau of this Congress.

(c) A resolution of thanks to the conveners and members of the sectional committees.

(d) A resolution of thanks to Rev. Canon Scott Holland, Rev. Dr. Reuan Thomas, and Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon, for their pulpit addresses before the Congress, and that they be requested to furnish copies of the same for publication; and also Stamford Hall Congregational

Church for the use of those buildings for public services.

(e) A letter of thanks to Her Majesty for permission to visit Windsor Castle.

(f) And also a resolution of thanks to the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, to Mr. Passmore Edwards, and other friends who have extended their hospitality to the members of the Congress.

XIX. This Congress places on record a heartfelt expression of gratitude to Almighty God for the remarkable harmony and concord which have characterized the meetings of the Assembly, in which so many men and women of varied nations, creeds, tongues, and races have gathered in closest coöperation; and in the conclusion of the labors of this Congress, it expresses its firm and unshaken belief in the ultimate triumph of the cause of *Peace*, and of the principles which have been advocated at these meetings.

The fundamental idea of the Congress is — firstly, that it is necessary to disseminate by all means among all men the belief that war is not advantageous for mankind, and that peace is a great benefit; and secondly, to influence governments, impressing upon them the advantages and necessity of disarmament.

To accomplish the first end, the Congress advises teachers of history, women, and ministers of the gospel, to teach people, every third Sunday of December, the evils of war and the benefits of peace; to accomplish the second, the Congress addresses itself to governments, suggesting to them disarmament and arbitration.

To preach the evils of war and the benefits of peace! But the evils of war are so well known to men, that from the earliest ages the most welcome greeting was always: "Peace be unto you!"

Not only Christians but all pagans were fully aware of the benefits of peace and of the evils of war thousands of years ago, so that the advice to the ministers of the gospel to preach against the evils of war and to advocate

the benefits of peace every third Sunday in December is quite superfluous.

A real Christian cannot do otherwise than preach thus, constantly, as long as he lives. But if there are those who are called Christians, or Christian preachers, who do not do this, there must be a cause for it, and so long as this cause exists no advice will avail. Still less effective will be the advice to governments to disband armies and have recourse to International Courts of Arbitration. Governments know very well all the difficulties and burdens of conscription and of maintaining armies, and if in the face of such difficulties and burdens they still continue to do so, it is evident that they have no means of doing otherwise, and the advice of a Congress could in no way bring about a change. But scientists will not admit this, and still hope to find some combination of influences by means of which those governments which make war may be induced to restrain themselves.

"Is it possible to avoid war?" writes a scientist in the *Revue des Revues* (No. 8 of 1891). "All agree in recognizing the fact that if war should ever break out in Europe, its consequences would be similar to those of the great invasions. It would imperil the very existence of nations; it would be bloody, atrocious, desperate. This consideration, and the consideration of the terrible nature of the engines of destruction at the command of modern science, retards its declaration and temporarily maintains the present system, — a system which might be continued indefinitely, if it were not for the enormous expenses that burden the European nations and threaten to culminate in disasters fully equal to those occasioned by war.

"Impressed with these thoughts, men of all nationalities have sought for means to arrest, or at least to diminish, the shocking consequences of the carnage that threatens us.

"Such are the questions which are to be debated by the next Congress of Universal Peace to be held in Rome, which have already been discussed in a recently published pamphlet on Disarmament.

“Unfortunately, it is quite certain that with the present organization of the greater number of the European states, isolated one from the other and controlled by different interests, the absolute cessation of war is an illusion which it would be folly to cherish. Still, the adoption of somewhat wiser rules and regulations in regard to these international duels would at least tend to limit their horrors. It is equally Utopian to build one’s hope on projects of disarmament, whose execution, owing to considerations of a national character, which exist in the minds of all our readers, is practically impossible.” (This probably means that France cannot disarm until she has retaliated.) “Public opinion is not prepared to accept them, and, furthermore, the international relations make it impossible to adopt them. Disarmament demanded by one nation of another, under conditions imperiling its security, would be equivalent to a declaration of war.

“Still, we must admit that an exchange of opinions between the nations interested may to a certain extent aid in establishing an international understanding, and also contribute to lessen the military expenses that now crush European nations, to the great detriment of the solution of social questions, the necessity of the solution of which is realized by each nation individually, under the penalty of being confronted by a civil war, due to the efforts made to prevent a foreign one.

“One may at least hope for a decrease of the enormous expenses necessary for the present military organization, which is maintained for the purpose of invading a foreign territory in twenty-four hours, or of a decisive battle a week after the declaration of war.”

It ought not to be possible for one nation to attack another and take possession of its territory within twenty-four hours. This practical sentiment was expressed by Maxime du Camp, and is the conclusion of his study of the subject.

Maxime du Camp offers the following propositions:—

“1st. A Diplomatic Congress, to assemble every year.

"2d. No war to be declared until two months after the incident which gave rise to it." (Here the difficulty lies in determining the nature of the incident that kindled the war—that is, every declaration of war is caused by several circumstances, and it would be necessary to determine from which one the two months are to be reckoned.)

"3d. No war shall be declared until the vote of the people shall have been taken.

"4th. Hostilities must not begin until a month after the declaration of war."

"*No war shall be declared*" etc. But who is to *prevent* hostilities *beginning*? Who will compel men to do this or that? Who will compel governments to wait a certain stated time? Other nations. But all the other nations are in the very same position, requiring to be restrained and kept within bounds, in other words, *coerced*. And who will *coerce* them? And how is it to be done? By public opinion. But if public opinion has sufficient influence to force a nation to postpone its action until a stated time, this public opinion can prevent it from waging war at any time.

But, it is said, there might be a balance of power, which would oblige nations to restrain themselves. This very experiment has been and is still being tried; this was the object of the Holy Alliance, the League of Peace, etc.

But all would agree to this, it is said. If all would agree to this, then wars would cease, and there would be no need of Courts of Appeal or of Arbitration.

"A Court of Arbitration would take the place of war. Disputes would be decided by a Board of Arbitrators, like that which pronounced on the Alabama claims. The Pope has been requested to decide the question concerning the Caroline Islands: Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, and Holland have declared that they prefer the decision of a Court of Arbitration to war."

I believe Monaco has expressed a similar wish. It is a pity that Germany, Russia, Austria, and France have thus far shown no sign of imitating their example.

It is astonishing how easily men can deceive themselves when they feel inclined.

The governments will agree to allow their disputes to be decided by a Board of Arbitration and to dismiss their armies. The trouble between Russia and Poland, England and Ireland, Austria and the Czechs, Turkey and the Slavs, France and Germany, will be settled by mutual consent. This is very much like suggesting to merchants and bankers that they shall sell at cost price, and devote their services gratuitously to the distribution of property.

Of course the essence of commerce and banking consists in buying cheap and selling dear, and therefore the suggestion to sell at cost price and the consequent overthrow of money amounts to a proposal of self-destruction.

The same is true in regard to governments.

The suggestion to governments to desist from violence, and to adjust all differences by arbitration, would be to recommend a suicidal policy, and no government would ever agree to that. Learned men found societies (there are more than one hundred of them), they assemble in Congresses (like those held in London and Paris, and the one which is to be held in Rome), they read essays, hold banquets, make speeches, edit journals devoted to the subject, and by all these means they endeavor to prove that the strain upon nations who are obliged to support millions of soldiers has become so severe that something must be done about it; that this armament is opposed to the character, the aims, and the wishes of the populations; but they seem to think that if they consume a good deal of paper, and devote a good deal of eloquence to the subject, that they may succeed in conciliating opposing parties and conflicting interests, and at last effect the suppression of war.

When I was a child I was told that if I wished to catch a bird I must put salt on its tail. I took a handful and went in pursuit of the birds, but I saw at once that if I could sprinkle salt on their tails I could catch them, and that what I had been told was only a joke.

Those who read essays and works on Courts of Arbitration and the disarmament of nations must feel very much the same.

If it were possible to sprinkle salt on a bird's tail it would be tantamount to saying that the bird could not fly, and therefore it would be no effort to catch it. If a bird has wings and does not wish to be caught, it will not allow any salt to be put on its tail, for it is the nature of a bird to fly. Likewise it is the nature of a government not to be ruled, but to rule its subjects. And a government rightly is named such only when it is able to rule its subjects, and not be ruled by them. This, therefore, is its constant aim, and it will never voluntarily resign its power. And as it derives its power from the army it will never give up the army, nor will it ever renounce that for which the army is designed, — war.

The misapprehension springs from the fact that the learned jurists, deceiving themselves as well as others, depict in their books an ideal of government, — not as it really is, an assembly of men who oppress their fellow-citizens, but in accordance with the scientific postulate, as a body of men who act as the representatives of the rest of the nation. They have gone on repeating this to others so long that they have ended by believing it themselves, and they really seem to think that justice is one of the duties of governments. History, however, shows us that governments, as seen from the reign of Cæsar to those of the two Napoleons and Prince Bismarck, are in their very essence a violation of justice; a man or a body of men having at command an army of trained soldiers, deluded creatures who are ready for any violence, and through whose agency they govern the State, will have no keen sense of the obligation of justice. Therefore governments will never consent to diminish the number of those well-trained and submissive servants, who constitute their power and influence.

Such is the attitude of certain scientists toward that self-contradiction under which the world groans, and such are their expedients for its relief. Tell these sci-

entists that the question deals only with the personal relations of each individual toward the moral and religious question, and then ask them what they think of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of taking part in the general conscription, and their sole reply will be a shrug of the shoulders ; they will not even deign to give a thought to your question. Their way of solving the difficulty is to make speeches, write books, choose their presidents, vice-presidents, and secretaries ; assembled in a body, to hold forth in one city or another. They think that the result of their efforts will be to induce governments to cease to recruit soldiers, on whom all their power depends ; they expect that their appeals will be heard, and that armies will be disbanded, leaving governments defenseless, not only in the presence of neighbors, but of their subjects ; that they, like highwaymen who, having bound their defenseless victims in order to rob them, no sooner hear the outcries of pain than they loosen the rope that causes it, and let their prisoners go free.

And there really are men who believe in this, who spend their time in promoting Leagues of Peace, in delivering addresses, and in writing books ; and of course the governments sympathize with it all, pretending that they approve of it ; just as they pretend to support temperance, while they actually derive the larger part of their income from intemperance ; just as they pretend to maintain liberty of the constitution, when it is the absence of liberty to which they owe their power ; just as they pretend to care for the improvement of the laboring classes, while on oppression of the workman rest the very foundations of the State ; just as they pretend to uphold Christianity, when Christianity is subversive of every government.

In order to accomplish these ends they have long since instituted laws in regard to intemperance that can never avail to destroy it ; educational projects that not only do not prevent the spread of ignorance, but do everything to increase it ; decrees in the name of liberty that are no restraint upon despotism ; measures for the benefit of the working-man which will never liberate

him from slavery; they have established a Christianity which serves to prop the government rather than destroy it. And now another interest is added to their cares,—the promotion of peace. Governments, or rather those rulers who are going about at present with their ministers of state, making up their minds on such radical questions as, for instance, whether the slaughter of millions shall begin this year or next, — they are quite well assured that discussions on peace are not going to prevent them from sending millions of men to slaughter whenever they see fit to do so. They like to hear these discussions, they encourage them, and even take part themselves.

It does no harm to the government; on the contrary, it is useful, by way of diverting observation from that radical question: When a man is drafted, ought he or ought he not to fulfil his military duty?

Thanks to all these unions and congresses, peace will presently be established; meanwhile put on your uniforms, and be prepared to worry and harass each other for our benefit, say the governments. And the scientists, the essayists, and the promoters of congresses take the same view.

This is one way of looking at it, and so advantageous for the State that all prudent governments encourage it.

The way another class has of regarding it is more tragic. They declare that although it is the fate of humanity to be forever striving after love and peace, it is nevertheless abnormal and inconsistent. Those who affirm this are mostly the sensitive men of genius, who see and realize all the horror, folly, and cruelty of war, but by some strange turn of mind never look about them for any means of escape, but who seem to take a morbid delight in realizing to the utmost the desperate condition of mankind. The view of the famous French writer, Maupassant, on the subject of war, affords a noteworthy example of this kind. Gazing from his yacht upon a drill and target-practice of French soldiers, the following thoughts arise in his mind:—

"I have but to think of the word 'war' and a paralyzing sense of horror creeps over me, as though I were listening to stories of witchcraft, or tales of the Inquisition, or of things abominable, monstrous, unnatural, of ages past.

"When people talk of cannibals we smile contemptuously with a sense of superiority to such savages. But who are the savages, the true savages? Those who fight that they may drive off the conquered, or those who fight for the pure pleasure of killing? Those sharp-shooters running over yonder are destined to be killed like a flock of sheep who are driven by the butcher to the slaughter-house. Those men will fall on some battlefield with a sabre-cut in the head, or with a ball through the heart. Yet they are young men, who might have done useful work. Their fathers are old and poor; their mothers, who have idolized them for twenty years as only mothers can idolize, will learn after six months, or perhaps a year, that the son, the baby, the grown-up child on whom so much love and pains were lavished, who was reared at such an expense, has been torn by a bullet, trampled under foot, or crushed by a cavalry charge, and finally flung like a dead dog into some ditch. Why must her boy, her beautiful, her only boy, the hope and pride of her life, why must he be killed? She knows not; she can but ask why.

"War!.... The fighting!.... The murdering!.... The slaughter of men!.... And to-day, with all our wisdom, civilization, with the advancement of science, the degree of philosophy to which the human spirit has attained, we have schools where the art of murder, of aiming with deadly accuracy and killing large numbers of men at a distance, is actually taught, killing poor, harmless devils who have families to support, killing them without even the pretext of the law.

"It is stupefying that the people do not rise up in arms against the governments. What difference is there between monarchies and republics? It is stupefying that society does not revolt as a unit at the very sound of the word war."

"Alas! we shall never be free from oppression of the hateful, hideous customs, the criminal prejudices, and the ferocious impulses of our barbarous ancestors, for we are beasts; and beasts we shall remain, moved by our instincts and susceptible of no improvement.

"Any one but Victor Hugo would have been banished when he uttered his sublime cry of freedom and truth:—

"To-day force is called violence, and the nations condemn it; they inveigh against war. Civilization, listening to the appeal of humanity, undertakes the case and prepares the accusation against the victors and the generals. The nations begin to understand that the magnitude of a crime cannot lessen its wickedness; that if it be criminal to kill one man, the killing of numbers cannot be regarded in the light of extenuation; that if it be shameful to steal, it cannot be glorious to lead an invading army.

"Let us proclaim these absolute truths, let us dishonor the name of war!"

"But the wrath and indignation of the poet are all in vain," continues Maupassant. "War is more honored than ever.

"A clever expert in this business, a genius in the art of murder, Von Moltke, once made to a peace-delegate the following astonishing reply:—

"War is sacred; it is a divine institution; it fosters every lofty and noble sentiment in the human heart: honor, self-sacrifice, virtue, courage, and saves men, so to speak, from settling into the most shocking materialism."

"Assembling in herds by the hundred thousand, marching night and day without rest, with no time for thought or for study, never to read, learning nothing, of no use whatsoever to any living being, rotting with filth, sleeping in the mud, living like a wild beast in a perennial state of stupidity, plundering cities, burning villages, ruining whole nations; then to encounter another mountain of human flesh, rush upon it, cause rivers of blood to flow, and strew the fields with the

dead and the dying, all stained with the muddy and reddened soil, to have one's limbs severed, one's brain scattered as wanton waste, and to perish in the corner of a field while one's aged parents, one's wife and children, are dying of hunger at home,—this is what it means to be saved from falling into the grossest materialism!

“Soldiers are the scourge of the world. We struggle against nature, ignorance, all kinds of obstacles, in the effort to make our wretched lives more endurable. There are men, scientists and philanthropists, who devote their whole lives to benefit their fellow-men, seeking to improve their condition. They pursue their efforts tirelessly, adding discovery to discovery, expanding the human intelligence, enriching science, opening new fields of knowledge, day by day increasing the well-being, comfort, and vigor of their country.

“Then war comes upon the scene, and in six months all the results of twenty years of patient labor and of human genius are gone forever, crushed by victorious generals.

“And this is what they mean when they speak of man's rescue from materialism!

“We have seen war. We have seen men maddened; returned to the condition of the brutes, we have seen them kill in wanton sport, out of terror, or for mere bravado and show. Where right exists no longer, and law is dead, where all sense of justice has been lost, we have seen innocent men shot down on the highway, because they were timid and thus excited suspicion. We have seen dogs chained to their masters' doors killed by way of target-practice, we have seen cows lying in a field fired at by the mitrailleuses, just for the fun of shooting at something.

“And this is what they call saving men from the most shocking materialism!

“To invade a country, to kill the man who defends his home because he wears a blouse and does not wear a *kepi*, to burn the dwellings of starving wretches, to ruin or plunder a man's household goods, to drink the

wine found in the cellars, to violate the women found in the streets, consume millions of francs in powder, and to leave misery and cholera in their track.

"This is what they mean by saving men from the most shocking materialism!

"What have military men ever done to prove that they possess the smallest degree of intelligence? Nothing whatever. What have they invented? The cannon and the musket; nothing more.

"Has not the inventor of the wheelbarrow, by the simple and practical contrivance of a wheel and a couple of boards, accomplished more than the inventor of modern fortification?

"What has Greece bequeathed to the world? Its literature and its marbles. Was she great because she conquered, or because she produced? Was it the Persian invasion that saved Greece from succumbing to the most shocking materialism?

"Did the invasions of the Barbarians save and regenerate Rome?

"Did Napoleon I. continue the great intellectual movement started by the philosophers at the end of the last century?

"Very well, then; can it be a matter of surprise, since governments usurp the rights of life and death over the people, that the people from time to time assume the right of life and death over their governments?

"They defend themselves, and they have the right. No man has an inalienable right to govern others. It is allowable only when it promotes the welfare of the governed. It is as much the duty of those who govern to avoid war as it is that of a captain of a ship to avoid shipwreck.

"When a captain has lost his ship he is indicted, and if he is found to have been careless or even incompetent, he is convicted. As soon as war has been declared why should not the people sit in judgment upon the act of the government?

"If they could once be made to understand the power that would be theirs, *if they were the judges of the rulers*

who lead them on to slay their fellow-men, if they refused to allow themselves to be needlessly slaughtered, if they were to turn their weapons against the very men who have put them into their hands—that day would see the last of war.... But never will that day arrive.”—“Sur l’Eau.”

The author perceives the full horror of war, realizes that the government is its author, that government forces men to go slay, or be slain, when there is no need for it; he realizes that the men who make up the armies might turn their weapons against the government and demand a reckoning. Still the author does not believe that this will ever happen, or that there is any possible deliverance from the existing condition of affairs.

He grants that the result of war is shocking, but he believes it to be inevitable; assuming that the never ceasing requisition of soldiers on the part of government is as inevitable as death, then wars must follow as a matter of course.

These are the words of a writer of talent, endowed with a faculty of vividly realizing his subject, which is the essence of the poetic gift. He shows us all the cruel contradictions between creed and deed; but since he fails to offer a solution, it is evident that he feels that such a contradiction must exist, and regards it as a contribution to the romantic tragedy of life. Another and an equally gifted writer, Edouard Rod, paints with colors still more vivid the cruelty and folly of the present situation, but he, like Maupassant, feels the influence of the dramatic element, and neither suggests a remedy nor anticipates any change.

“Why do we toil? Why do we plan and hope to execute? And how can one even love one’s neighbor in these troublous times, when the morrow is nothing but a menace?.... Everything that we have begun, our ripening schemes, our plans for work, the little good that we might accomplish, will it not all be swept away by the storm that is gathering?.... Everywhere the soil

quakes beneath our feet, and threatening clouds hang low on the horizon. Ah! if we had nothing more to fear than the bugbear of the Revolution!.... Unable to conceive a society worse than our own, I am more inclined to distrust than to fear the one that may replace it, and if I should suffer in consequence of the change, I should console myself with the reflection that the executioners of the present were victims of the past, and the hope of a change for the better would make me endure the worst. But it is not this remote danger which alarms me. I see another close at hand and far more cruel, since it is both unjustifiable and irrational, and nothing good can come out of it. Day by day the chances of war are weighed, and day by day they become more pitiless.

“The human mind refuses to believe in the catastrophe which even now looms up before us, and which the close of this century must surely witness, a catastrophe which will put an end to all the progress of our age, and yet we must try to realize it. Science has devoted all her energy these twenty years to the invention of destructive weapons, and soon a few cannon-balls will suffice to destroy an army;¹ not the few thousands of wretched mercenaries, whose life-blood has been bought and paid for, but whole nations are about to exterminate each other; during conscription their time is stolen from them in order to steal their lives with more certainty. By way of stimulating a thirst for blood mutual animosities are excited, and gentle, kind-hearted men allow themselves to be deluded, and it will not be long before they attack each other with all the ferocity of wild beasts; multitudes of peace-loving citizens will obey a foolish command, God only knows on what pretext,—some stupid frontier quarrel, perhaps, or it may be some colonial mercantile interest. They will go like a flock of sheep to the slaughter, yet knowing where they go, conscious that they are leaving their wives and their chil-

¹ The book was published a year ago, and since then dozens of new weapons and smokeless powder have been invented for the annihilation of mankind. — AUTHOR.

dren to suffer hunger ; anxious, but unable to resist the enticement of those plausible and treacherous words that have been trumpeted into their ears. *Unresistingly they go ; although they form a mass and a force, they fail to realize the extent of their power, and that if they were all agreed they might establish the reign of reason and fraternity*, instead of lending themselves to the barbarous trickeries of diplomacy.

“So self-deceived are they that bloodshed takes on the aspect of duty, and they implore the blessing of God upon their sanguinary hopes. As they march, they trample underfoot the harvests which they themselves have planted, burning the cities which they have helped to build, with songs, shouts of enthusiasm, and music. And their sons will raise a statue to those who have slain them by the most approved methods. The fate of a whole generation hangs on the hour when some saturnine politician shall make the sign, and the nations will rush upon each other. We know that the noblest among us will be cut down, and that our affairs will go to destruction. *We know this, we tremble in anger, yet are powerless*. We have been caught in a snare of bureaucracy and waste paper from which we can only escape by measures too energetic for us. We belong to the laws which we have made for our protection, and which oppress us. *We are nothing more than the creatures of that antinomic abstraction, the State; which makes of each individual a slave in the name of all, each individual of which all, taken separately, would desire the exact contrary of what he will be made to do*.

“And if it were but the sacrifice of a single generation ! But many other interests are involved.

“Paid orators, demagogues, taking advantage of the passions of the masses and of the simple-minded who are dazzled by high-sounding phrases, have so embittered national hatreds that to-morrow’s war will decide the fate of a race : one of the component parts of the modern world is threatened ; the vanquished nation will morally disappear ; it matters not which chances to be the victim, a power will disappear (as though there had ever

been one too many for the good). A new Europe will then be established on a basis so unjust, so brutal, so bloodstained, that it cannot fail to be worse than that of to-day, — more iniquitous, more barbarous, and more aggressive.

“Thus a fearful depression hangs over us. We are like men dashing up and down a narrow passageway, with muskets pointed at us from all the roofs. We work like sailors executing their last manœuver after the ship has begun to sink. Our pleasures are those of the prisoner to whom a choice dish is offered a quarter of an hour before his execution. Anxiety paralyzes our thought, and the utmost we can do is to wonder, as we con the vague utterances of ministers, or construe the meaning of the words of monarchs, or turn over those ascribed to the diplomatists, retailed at random by the newspapers, never sure of their information, whether all this is to happen to-morrow or the day after, whether it is this year or next that we are all to be killed. In truth, one might seek in vain throughout the pages of history for an epoch more unsettled or more pregnant with anxiety.” — “*Le Sens de la Vie.*”

He shows us that the power is really in the hands of those who allow themselves to be destroyed, in the hands of separate individuals who compose the mass; that the root of all evil is the State. It would seem as if the contradiction between one's faith and one's actual life had reached its utmost limit, and that the solution could not be far to seek.

But the author is of a different opinion. All that he sees in this is the tragedy of human life, and having given us a detailed description of the horror of this state of things, he perceives no reason why human life should not be spent in the midst of this horror. Such are the views of the second class of writers, who consider only the fatalistic and tragic side of war.

There is still another view, and this is the one held by men who have lost all conscience, and are consequently dead to common sense and human feeling.

To this class belong Moltke, whose opinions are quoted by Maupassant, and nearly all military men who have been taught to believe this cruel superstition, who are supported by it, and who naturally regard war not only as an inevitable evil, but as a necessary and even profitable occupation. And there are civilians too, scientists, men of refinement and education, who hold very much the same views.

The famous academician Doucet, in reply to a query of the editor of the *Revue des Revues* in regard to his opinions on war, replies as follows in the number containing letters concerning war:¹—

“DEAR SIR, — When you ask of the least belligerent of all the academicians if he is a partizan of war, his reply is already given. Unfortunately you yourself classify the peaceful contemplations which inspire your fellow-countrymen at the present hour as idle visions.

“Ever since I was born I have always heard good men protesting against this shocking custom of international carnage. All recognize this evil and lament it. But where is its remedy?

“The effort to suppress duelling has often been made. It seems to be so easy. Far from it. All that has been accomplished toward achieving this noble purpose amounts to nothing, nor will it ever amount to more. Against war and duelling the congresses of the two hemispheres vote in vain. Superior to all arbitrations, conventions, and legislations will ever remain human honor, which has always demanded the duel, and national interests, which have always called for war. Nevertheless, I wish with all my heart that the Universal Peace Congress may succeed at last in its difficult and honorable task. — Accept the assurance, etc.,

“CAMILLE DOUCET.”

It amounts to this, that honor obliges men to fight, that it is for the interest of nations that they should

¹ *La Revue des Revues*, “La guerre, état de la question, jugé par nos grands hommes contemporains.” — TR.

attack and destroy one another, and that all endeavors to abolish war can but excite a smile.

Jules Claretie expresses himself in similar terms:—

“DEAR SIR,—A sensible man can have but one opinion on the question of war and peace. Humanity was created to live—to live for the purpose of perfecting its existence by peaceful labor. The mutual relations of cordiality which are promoted and preached by the Universal Congress of Peace may be but a dream perhaps, yet certainly is the most delightful of dreams. The vision of the land of promise is ever before the eyes, and upon the soil of the future the harvest will ripen, secure from the plowing of the projectile, or the crushing of cannon-wheels. But, alas!.... Since philosophers and philanthropists are not the rulers of mankind, it is fit that our soldiers should guard our frontiers and our homes, and their weapons, skilfully wielded, are perhaps the surest guarantees of the peace we love so well. Peace is given only to the strong and the courageous. — Accept the assurances of, etc.,

“JULES CLARETIE.”

The substance of this is, that there is no harm in talking about what no one intends to do, and what ought not in any event to be done. When fighting is in order, there is no alternative but to fight.

Émile Zola, the most popular novelist in Europe, gives utterance to his views on the subject of war in the following terms:—

“I look upon war as a fatal necessity which seems to us indispensable because of its close connection with human nature and all creation. Would that it might be postponed as long as possible! Nevertheless a time will come when we shall be forced to fight. At this moment I am regarding the subject from the universal standpoint, and am not hinting at our unfriendly relations with Germany, which are but a trifling incident in the world’s history. I affirm that war is useful and

necessary, since it is one of the conditions of human existence. The fighting instinct is to be found not only among the different tribes and peoples, but in domestic and private life as well. It is one of the chief elements of progress, and every advancing step taken by mankind up to the present time has been accompanied by bloodshed.

“Men have talked, and still do talk, of disarmament; and yet disarmament is utterly impossible, for even though it were possible, we should be compelled to renounce it. It is only an armed nation that can be powerful and great. I believe that a general disarmament would be followed by a moral degradation, assuming the form of a widespread effeminacy which would impede the progress of humanity. Warlike nations have always been vigorous. The military art has contributed to the development of other arts. History shows us this. In Athens and Rome, for instance, commerce, industry, and literature reached their highest development when these cities ruled the world by the force of arms. And nearer to our own time we found an example in the reign of Louis XIV. The wars of the great king, so far from impeding the advance of arts and sciences, seemed rather to promote and to favor their progress.”

War is useful!

But chief among the advocates of these views, and the most talented of all the writers of this tendency, is the academician Vogüé, who, in an article on the military section of the Exhibition of 1889, writes as follows:—

“On the Esplanade des Invalides, the center of exotic and colonial structures, a building of a more severe order stands out from the midst of the picturesque bazaar; these various fragments of our terrestrial globe adjoin the palace of war. A magnificent theme and antithesis for humanitarian rhetoric which never loses a chance to lament a juxtaposition of this kind, and to utter its

'this will kill that' [*ceci tuera cela*¹]; that the confederacy of nations brought about by science and labor will overpower the military instinct. Let it cherish this vision of a golden age, caressing it with fond hopes. We have no objection; but should it ever be realized, it would very soon become an age of corruption. History teaches us that the former has been accomplished by the means of the latter, that blood is necessary to hasten and to seal the confederacy of nations. In our own time the natural sciences have strengthened the mysterious law which revealed itself to Joseph de Maistre through the inspiration of his genius and meditation on primordial dogmas; he saw how the world would redeem its hereditary fall by offering a sacrifice. Science shows us that the world is made better by struggle and violent selection; this affirmation of the same law, with varied utterance, comes from two sources. It is by no means a pleasant one. The laws of the world, however, are not established for our pleasure, but for our perfection. Let us then enter this necessary and indispensable palace of war, and we shall have the opportunity to observe how our most inveterate instinct, losing nothing of its power, is transformed in its adaptation to the various demands of historical moments."

This idea, namely, that the proof of the necessity of war may be found in the writings of De Maistre and of Darwin, two great thinkers, as he calls them, pleases Vogüé so much that he repeats it.

"Sir," he writes to the editor of the *Revue des Revues*, "you ask my opinion in regard to the possible success of the Universal Peace Congress. I believe, with Darwin, that vehement struggle is the law governing all being, and I believe, with Joseph de Maistre, that it is a divine law, — two different modes of characterizing the same principle. If, contrary to all expectations, a certain fraction of humanity—for example, all the civilized West—should succeed in arresting the issue of this law, the more primitive races would execute it

¹ Words taken from Victor Hugo's "Notre Dame," where he says that printing will kill architecture. — AUTHOR.

against us; in these races the voice of nature would prevail over human intellect. And they would succeed, because the certainty of *peace*—I do not say peace, but the absolute *certainty of peace*—would in less than half a century produce a corruption and a decadence in men more destructive than the worst of wars. I believe that one should act in regard to war—that criminal law of humanity—as in regard to all criminal laws: modify it, or endeavor to make its execution as rare as possible, and use every means in our power to render it superfluous. But experience of all history teaches us that it cannot be suppressed, so long as there shall be found on earth two men, bread, money, and a woman between them. I should be very glad if the Congress could prove to me the contrary; but I doubt if it can disprove history, and the law of God and of nature.—Accept my assurance, etc.,

“E. M. DE VOGÜÉ.”

This may be summed up as follows: History and nature, God and man, show us that so long as there are two men left on earth, and the stakes are bread, money, and woman, just so long there will be war. That is, that no amount of civilization will ever destroy that abnormal concept of life which makes it impossible for men to divide bread, money (of all absurdities), and woman without a fight. It is odd that people meet in congresses and hold forth as to the best method of catching birds by putting salt on their tails, although they must know that this can never be done! It is astonishing that men like Rod, Maupassant, and others, clearly realizing all the horrors of war, and all the contradictions that ensue from men not doing what they ought to do, and what it would be to their advantage to do, who bemoan the tragedy of life, and yet fail to see that this tragic element would vanish as soon as men ceased to discuss a subject which should not be discussed, and ceased to do that which is both painful and repulsive for them to do!

One may wonder at them; but men who, like Vogüé

and others, believe in the law of evolution, and look upon war as not only unavoidable, but even useful, and therefore desirable, — such men are fairly shocking, horrible in their moral aberration. The former at least declare that they hate evil and love good, but the latter believe there is neither good nor evil.

All this discussion of the possibility of establishing peace instead of continual warfare is but the mischievous sentimentalism of idle talkers. There is a law of evolution which seems to prove that I must live and do wrong. What, then, can I do? I am an educated man, — I am familiar with the doctrine of evolution; hence it follows that I shall work evil. “*Entrons au palais de la guerre.*” There is a law of evolution, and therefore there can be no real evil; and one must live one’s life and leave the rest to the law of evolution. This is the last expression of refined civilization; it is with this idea that the educated classes at the present day deaden their conscience.

The desire of these classes to preserve their favorite theories and the life that they have built up on them can go no further. They lie, and by their specious arguments deceive themselves as well as others, obscuring and deadening their intuitive perceptions.

Rather than adapt their lives to their consciousness, they try by every means to befog and to silence it. But the light shines in the darkness, and even now it begins to dawn.

CHAPTER VII

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MILITARY CONSCRIPTION

General military conscription is not a political accident, but the extreme limit of contradiction contained in the social life-conception — Rise of power in society — The basis of power is personal violence — The organization of armed men, an army, is required by power to enable it to accomplish violence — The rise of power in society, that is, of violence, destroys by degrees the social life-conception — Attitude of power toward the masses, that is to say, the oppressed — Governments endeavor to make workmen believe in the necessity of State violence

for their preservation from external foes—But the army is needed principally to defend government from its own subjects, the oppressed working-men—Address of Caprivi—All the privileges of the ruling classes are assured by violence—Increase of armies leads to a general military conscription—General military conscription destroys all the advantages of social life which it is the duty of the State to guard—General military conscription is the extreme limit of obedience, as it demands in the name of the State the abnegation of all that may be dear to man—Is the State needed?—The sacrifices which it requires from citizens through the general military conscription have no longer any basis—Hence it is more advantageous for man to rebel against the demands of the State than to submit to them.

THE efforts which the educated men of the upper classes are making to silence the growing consciousness that the present system of life must be changed, are constantly on the increase, while life itself, continuing to develop and to become more complex without changing its direction, as it increases the incongruities and suffering of human existence, brings men to the extreme limit of this contradiction. An example of this uttermost limit is found in the general military conscription.

It is usually supposed that this conscription, together with the increasing armaments and the consequent increase of the taxes and national debts of all countries, are the accidental results of a certain crisis in European affairs, which might be obviated by certain political combinations, without change of the interior life.

This is utterly erroneous. The general conscription is nothing but an internal contradiction which has crept into the social life-conception, and which has only become evident because it has arrived at its utmost limits at a period when men have attained a certain degree of material development.

The social life-conception transfers the significance of life from the individual to mankind in general, through the unbroken continuity of the family, the tribe, and the State.

According to the social life-conception it is supposed that as the significance of life is comprised in the sum total of mankind, each individual will of his own accord sacrifice his interests to those of the whole. This in fact

has always been the case with certain aggregates, like the family or the tribe.

In consequence of custom, transmitted by education and confirmed by religious suggestion, and without compulsion, the individual merges his interests in those of the group, and sacrifices himself for the benefit of the whole.

But the more complex became societies, the larger they grew, — conquest especially contributing to unite men in social organizations, — the more individuals would be found striving to attain their ends at the expense of their fellow-men; and thus the necessity for subjugation by power, or, in other words, by violence, became more and more frequent.

The advocates of the social life-conception usually attempt to combine the idea of authority, otherwise violence, with that of moral influence; but such a union is utterly impossible.

The result of moral influence upon man is to change his desires, so that he willingly complies with what is required of him. A man who yields to moral influence takes pleasure in conforming his actions to its laws; whereas authority, as the word is commonly understood, is a means of coercion, by which a man is forced to act in opposition to his wishes. A man who submits to authority does not do as he pleases, he yields to compulsion, and in order to force a man to do something for which he has an aversion, the threat of physical violence, or violence itself, must be employed: he may be deprived of his liberty, flogged, mutilated, or he may be threatened with these punishments. And this is what constitutes power both in the past and in the present.

Despite the unremitting efforts of rulers to conceal these facts, and to attribute a different significance to authority, it simply means the rope and chain wherewith a man is bound and dragged, the lash wherewith he is flogged, the knife or ax wherewith his limbs, nose, ears, and head are hewed off. Authority is either the menace or the perpetration of these acts. This was

the practice in the times of Nero and Genghis Khan, and is still in force even in the most liberal governments, like the republics of France and America. If men submit to authority, it is only because they fear that if they were to resist, they would be subjected to violence. All the requisitions of the State, such as the payment of taxes and the fulfilment of public duties, the submission to penalties in the form of exile, fines, etc., to which men seem to yield voluntarily, are always enforced by the physical threat or the reality of physical punishment.

Physical violence is the basis of authority.

It is the military organization that makes it possible to inflict physical violence, that organization wherein the entire armed force acts as one man, obeying a single will. This assemblage of armed men, submitting to one will, forms what is called an army. The army has ever been and still is the basis of an authority, vested in the commanding generals; and the most engrossing interest of every sovereign, from the Roman Cæsars to the Russian and German emperors, has always been to protect and flatter the army, for they realize that when the army is on their side, power is also in their hands.

It is the drilling and the increase of the troops required for the maintenance of authority which has brought into the social life-conception an element of dissolution.

The aim of authority, and its consequent justification, is to restrain those men who are endeavoring, by methods which are detrimental to those of mankind in general, to promote their own interests. But whether authority has been acquired by force of arms, or by hereditary succession, or by election, men who have gained authority are in no way different from their fellow-men; they are just like all others, not inclined to waive their own interests in favor of the many, but, since they hold power in their hands, are more likely to make the interests of the many give way to their own. Whatever measures may have been devised by way of restraining those in authority who might seek

their own ends at the expense of the public, or to vest authority in the hands of infallible men, no satisfactory results have as yet been attained.

Attributing divine right to kings, hereditary succession, election; congresses, parliaments, and senates; — none of these have ever yet proved effectual. Everybody knows that no expedient has ever succeeded either in committing authority into the hands of infallible men, or of preventing its abuses. On the contrary, we know that men who have the authority, be they emperors, ministers of State, chiefs of police, or even policemen, always are more liable, because of their position, to become immoral, — that is, to put their own private interests before those of the public, — than men who do not possess such an authority; and this is inevitable.

The social life-conception could be justified only while all men voluntarily sacrificed their private interests to those of the public in general; but no sooner did men appear who refused to sacrifice their interests, than authority, in other words, violence, was required to restrain these men. Thus there entered into the social life-conception, and the organization based on it, a principle containing within itself the germs of dissolution, — the principle of authority, or the tyranny of the few over the many. In order that the authority held by certain men might fulfil its object, which is to restrain those who are trying to further their own interests to the detriment of society in general, it would be necessary to have it in the hands of infallible men, as is supposed to be the case in China, or as it was believed to be in the Middle Ages, and is even at the present time by those who have faith in consecration by unction. It is only under such conditions that the social organization can be justified.

But as no such conditions exist, and, furthermore, as men who are in authority, from the very fact of its possession, must ever be far from being saints, the social organization that is based upon authority cannot possibly have any justification.

If there ever was a time when a low standard of mo-

ality, and the general tendency of men toward violence, called for an authority possessing the power to restrict this violence, an authority whose existence may have been an advantage, — that is, when the violence of the State was less than the violence of individuals toward each other, — we cannot help seeing now that this prerogative of the State, when violence no longer exists, cannot go on forever. Morals improved in proportion to the gradual decrease of individual violence, while the prerogative of authority lost ground in measure as it became corrupted by the possession of unbridled power.

The entire history of the last 2000 years will have been told when we have described this change in the relations between the moral development of man and the demoralization of governments. In its simplest form it runs thus: men lived together in tribes, in families, and in races, and were at enmity one with another; they employed violence, they spread desolation, they murdered one another. Thus devastation was on a scale both great and small: man fought with man, tribe with tribe, family with family, race with race, nation with nation. The larger and more powerful communities absorbed the weaker ones; and the greater and more vigorous became the aggregation of men, the more seldom did one hear of acts of violence within these communities, and the more secure the continuity of their existence appeared.

When the members of a tribe or a family unite together to form one community, they are naturally less hostile to each other, and the tribes and families are not so likely to die out; while among the citizens of a State subjected to one authority the contentions seem even less frequent, and hence is the life of the State on a basis still more assured.

These fusions into larger and larger aggregates took place, not because men realized that it would be to their advantage, as is illustrated by the fable that tells of the falling of the Varegs in Russia, but are due rather to natural growth on the one hand, and struggle and conquest on the other.

When conquest was achieved, the authority of the conqueror put an end to internal strife, and the social life-conception was justified. But this justification is only temporary. Internal feuds cease only when the pressure of authority is brought to bear with greater weight upon individuals formerly inimical to one another. The violence of the internal struggle, not annihilated by authority, is the offspring of authority itself. Authority is in the hands of men who, like all the rest, are ever ready to sacrifice the common weal if their own personal interests are at stake ; with the sole difference that these men, encountering no resistance from the oppressed, are wholly subject to the corrupting influence of authority itself.

Therefore it is that the evil principle of violence relegated to authority is ever increasing, and the evil becomes in time worse than that which it is supposed to control : whereas, in the individual members of society, the inclination to violence is always diminishing, and the violence of authority becomes less and less necessary.

As its power increases in measure of its duration, State authority, though it may eradicate internal violence, introduces into life other and new forms of violence, always increasing in intensity. And though the violence of authority in the State is less striking than that of individual members of society toward each other, its principal manifestation being not that of strife, but of oppression, it exists none the less, and in the highest degree.

It cannot be otherwise ; for not only does the possession of authority corrupt men, but, either from design or unconsciously, rulers are always striving to reduce their subjects to the lowest degree of weakness, — for the more feeble the subject, the less the effort required to subdue him.

Therefore violence employed against the oppressed is pushed to its utmost limit, just stopping short of killing the hen that lays the golden egg. But if the hen has ceased to lay, like the American Indians, the Fiji

Islanders, or the Negroes, then it is killed, despite the sincere protests of the philanthropists against that mode of procedure.

The most conclusive proof of this assertion, at the present time, is the position of the working-men, who are in truth simply vanquished men.

Despite all the pretended efforts of the upper classes to lighten their position, all the working-men of the world are subjected to an immutable iron rule, which prescribes that they shall have scarcely enough to live upon, in order that their necessities may urge them to unremitting toil, the fruits of which are to be enjoyed by their masters, in other words, their conquerors.

It has always been the case that, after the long continuance and growth of power, the advantages accruing to those who have submitted to it have failed, while the disadvantages have multiplied.

Thus it is and thus it always has been, under whatsoever form of government the nation may have lived; only that where despotism prevails authority is confined to a limited number of oppressors, and violence takes on a ruder form, while in the constitutional monarchies, and in the republics of France and America, authority is distributed among a greater number of oppressors, and its manifestations are less rude; but the result, in which the disadvantages of dominion are greater than the advantages, and the method — reduction of the oppressed to the lowest possible degree of abjection, for the benefit of the oppressors, remain ever the same.

Such has been the position of all the oppressed, but until lately they have been unaware of the fact, and for the most part have innocently believed that governments were instituted for their benefit, to preserve them from destruction, and that to permit the idea that men might live without governments would be a thought sacrilegious beyond expression; it would be the doctrine of anarchy, with all its attendant horrors.

Men believed, as in something so thoroughly proved that it needed no further testimony, that as all nations had hitherto developed into the State form, this was to

remain the indispensable condition for the development of mankind forever.

And so it has gone on for hundreds, nay, thousands of years, and the governments, that is to say, their representatives, have endeavored, and still go on endeavoring, to preserve this delusion among the people.

As it was during the time of the Roman emperors, so it is now. Although the idea of the uselessness, and even of the detriment, of power enters more and more into the consciousness of men, it might endure forever, if governments did not think it necessary to increase the armies in order to support their authority.

It is the popular belief that governments increase armies as a means of defense against other nations, forgetting that troops are principally needed by governments to protect them against their own enslaved subjects.

This has always been necessary, and has grown more so with the spread of education, the increase of intercourse among different nationalities; and at the present time, in view of the communist, socialist, anarchist, and labor movements, it is a more urgent necessity than ever. Governments realize this fact, and increase their principal means of defense, — the disciplined army.¹

It was but recently that in the German Reichstag, in giving the reason why more money was needed to increase the pay of the subaltern officers, the German Chancellor answered candidly that trusty subaltern officers are needed in order to fight against socialism. Caprivi put into words what every one knows, although

¹ That the abuse of authority exists in America, despite the small number of troops, by no means refutes our argument; on the contrary, it serves rather as a testimony in its favor. In America there are fewer troops than in other States, and nowhere do we find less oppression of the downtrodden classes, and nowhere have men come so near to the abolition of governmental abuses, and even of government itself. However, it is in America that, owing to the growing unity among the working-men, voices have been heard, more and more frequently of late, calling for an increase of troops, and this when no foreign invasion threatens the States. The ruling classes are fully aware that an army of 50,000 men is insufficient, and, having lost confidence in Pinkerton's forces, they believe that their salvation can only be secured by the increase of the army.

it has been carefully concealed from the people. The reason why the Swiss and Scottish Guards were hired to protect the popes and the French kings, and why the Russian regiments are so carefully shuffled, is in order that those which are posted in the interior may be recruited by men from the borders, and those on the borders by men from the interior. The meaning of Caprivi's reply, translated into simple, everyday language, means that money is needed, not to repel a foreign enemy, but to bribe the subaltern officers to hold themselves in readiness to act against the oppressed working-men.

Caprivi incidentally expressed what every man knows — or if he does not know it he feels it — namely, that the existing system of life is such as it is, not because it is natural for it to be so, or that the people are content to have it so, but because violence on the part of governments, the army, with its bribed subaltern officers, its captains and generals, sustains it.

If a working-man has no land, if he is not allowed to enjoy the natural right possessed by every man, to draw from the soil the means of subsistence for himself and his family, it is not so because the people oppose it, but because the right to grant or to withhold this privilege from working-men is given to certain individuals — namely, to the landed proprietors. And this unnatural order of things is maintained by the troops. If the enormous wealth earned and saved by working-men is not regarded as common property, but as something to be enjoyed by the chosen few; if certain men are invested with the power of levying taxes on labor, and with the right of using that money for whatsoever purposes they deem necessary; if the strikes of the working-men are suppressed, and the trusts of the capitalists are encouraged; if certain men are allowed to choose in the matter of religious and civil education and the instruction of children; if to certain others the right is given to frame laws which all men must obey, and if they are to enjoy the control of human life and property, — all this is not because the people wish it, or because it has

come about in the course of nature, but because the governments will have it so for their own advantage and that of the ruling classes; and all this is accomplished by means of physical violence.

If every man is not yet aware of this, he will find it out whenever attempts are made to change the present order of things.

And therefore all the governments and the ruling classes stand in need of troops above all things, in order to maintain a system of life which, far from having developed from the needs of the people, is often detrimental to them, and is only advantageous for the government and the ruling classes.

Every government requires troops to enforce obedience, that it may profit by the labor of its subjects. But no government exists alone: side by side with it stands the government of the adjacent country, which is also profiting by the enforced labor of its subjects, and ever ready to pounce upon its neighbor and take possession of the goods which it has won from the labor of its own subjects. Hence it is that every government needs an army, not only for home use, but to guard its plunder from foreign depredations. Thus each government finds itself obliged to outdo its neighbor in the increase of its army, and, as Montesquieu said one hundred and fifty years ago, the expansion of armies is a veritable contagion.

One State makes additions to its army in order to overawe its own subjects; its neighbor takes alarm, and straightway follows the example.

Armies have reached the millions which they now number not only from the fear of foreign invasion; the increase was first caused by the necessity for putting down all attempts at rebellion on the part of the subjects of the State. The causes for the expansion of armies are contemporary, the one depending on the other; armies are needed against internal attempts at revolt, as well as for external defense. The one depends upon the other. The despotism of governments increases exactly in proportion to the increase of their strength and their in-

ternal successes, and their foreign aggression with the increase of internal despotism.

European governments try to outdo one another, ever increasing their armaments, and compelled at last to adopt the expedient of a general conscription as a means of enrolling the greatest number of troops at the smallest possible expense.

Germany was the first to whom this plan suggested itself. And no sooner was it done by one nation than all the others were forced to do likewise. Thus all the citizens took up arms to assist in upholding the wrongs that were committed against them; in fact, they became their own oppressors.

General military conscription was the inevitable and logical consummation at which it was but natural to arrive; at the same time it is the last expression of the innate contradiction of the social life-conception which sprang into existence when violence was required for its support.

General military conscription made this contradiction a conspicuous fact. Indeed, the very significance of the social life-conception consists in this, — that a man, realizing the cruelty of the struggle of individuals among themselves, and the peril that the individual incurs, seeks protection by transferring his private interests to a social community; whereas the result of the system of conscription is that men, after having made every sacrifice to escape from the cruel struggle and uncertainties of life, are once more called upon to undergo all the dangers they had hoped to escape, and moreover, the community — the State for which the individuals gave up their previous advantages — is now exposed to the same risk of destruction from which the individual himself formerly suffered. Governments should have set men free from the cruelty of the personal struggle, and given them confidence in the inviolable structure of State life; but instead of doing this they impose on individuals a repetition of the same dangers, with this difference, that in the place of struggle between individuals of the same group, it is a case of struggle between groups.

The establishment of a general military conscription is like the work of a man who props a crumbling house. The walls have settled, sloping inward — he braces them ; the ceiling begins to hang down — he supports that ; and when the boards between give way, other braces are supplied. At last it reaches the point when, although the braces hold the house together, they actually make it uninhabitable.

The same may be said of the general conscription system. The general military conscription nullifies all those advantages of social life which it is expected to protect.

The advantages of social life are those guarantees which it offers for the protection of property and labor, as well as coöperation for the purposes of mutual advantage ; the general military conscription destroys all this.

The taxes collected from the people for purposes of war absorb the greater part of the productions of their labor, which the army ought to protect.

When men are taken from the ordinary avocations of daily life, labor is practically destroyed. Where war is ever threatening to break forth, it does not seem worth while to improve social conditions.

If a man had formerly been told that unless he submitted to the civil authority he would run the risk of being assaulted by wicked men, that he would be in danger from domestic as well as from foreign foes, against whom he would be forced to defend himself, that he might be murdered, and therefore he would find it for his advantage to suffer certain privations if by that means he succeeded in escaping all these perils, he might have believed this, especially as the sacrifices required by the State promised him the hope of a peaceful existence within the well-established community in whose name he had made them. But now, when these sacrifices are not only multiplied, but the promised advantages are not realized, it is quite natural for men to think that their subjection to authority is utterly useless.

But the fatal significance of the general conscription,

as the manifestation of that contradiction which dwells in the social life-conception, lies not in this. Wherever military conscription exists, every citizen who becomes a soldier likewise becomes a supporter of the State system, and a participant in whatsoever the State may do, at the same time that he does not acknowledge its validity; and this may be called its chief manifestation.

Governments declare that armies are principally required for external defense; but this is untrue. They are, in the first place, needed to overawe their own subjects, and every man who yields to military conscription becomes an involuntary participator in all the oppressive acts of government toward its subjects. It is necessary to remember what goes on in every State in the name of order and the welfare of the community, all the while enforced by military authority, to be convinced that every man who fulfils military duty becomes a participant in acts of the State of which he cannot approve. Every dynastic and political feud, all the executions resulting from such feuds, the crushing of rebellions, the use of the military in dispersing mobs, in putting down strikes, all extortionate taxation, the injustice of land ownership and the limitations of freedom of labor, — all this is done, if not directly by the troops, then by the police supported by the troops. He who performs his military duty becomes a participant in all these acts, about which he often feels more than dubious, and which are in most cases directly opposed to his conscience. Men do not wish to leave the land which they have tilled for generations; they do not wish to disperse on the bidding of the government; they do not wish to pay the taxes which are extorted from them; neither do they willingly submit to laws which they have not helped to make; they do not wish to give up their nationality. And I, if I am performing military duty, must come forward and strike these men down. I cannot take part in such proceedings without asking myself if they be right. And ought I to coöperate in carrying them out?

General military conscription is the last step in the process of coercion required by governments for the support of the whole structure; for subjects it is the extreme limit of obedience. It is the keystone of the arch that supports the walls, the abstraction of which would destroy the whole fabric. The time has come when the ever growing abuses of governments, and their mutual contests, have required from all their subjects not only material but moral sacrifices, till each man pauses and asks himself, Can I make these sacrifices? And for whose sake am I to make them? These sacrifices are demanded in the name of the State. In the name of the State I am asked to give up all that makes life dear to a man,—peace, family, safety, and personal dignity. What, then, is this State in whose name such appalling sacrifices are demanded? And of what use is it?

We are told that the State is necessary, in the first place, because were it not for that no man would be safe from violence and the attacks of wicked men; in the second place, without the State we should be like savages, possessing neither religion, morals, education, instruction, commerce, means of communication, nor any other social institutions; and, in the third place, because without the State we should be subject to the invasion of the neighboring nations.

“Were it not for the State,” we are told, “we should be subjected to violence and to the attacks of evil men in our own land.”

But who are these evil men from whose violence and attacks the government and the army saves us? If such men existed three or four centuries ago, when men prided themselves on their military skill and strength of arm, when a man proved his valor by killing his fellow-men, we find none such at the present time: men of our time neither use nor carry weapons, and, believing in the precepts of humanity and pity for their neighbors, they are as desirous for peace and a quiet life as we are ourselves. Hence this extraordinary class of marauders, against whom the State might defend us, no longer

exists. But if, when they speak of the men from whose attacks the government defends us, we understand that they mean the criminal classes, in that case we know that they are not extraordinary beings, like beasts of prey among sheep, but are men very much like ourselves, who are naturally just as reluctant to commit crimes as those against whom they commit them. We know now that threats and punishments are powerless to decrease the numbers of such men, but that their numbers may be decreased by change of environment and by moral influence. Hence the theory of the necessity of State violence in order to protect mankind against evil-doers, if it had any foundation three or four centuries ago, has none whatever at the present time. One might say quite the reverse nowadays, for the activity of governments, with their antiquated and merciless methods of punishment, their galleys, prisons, gallows, and guillotines, so far below the general plane of morality, tends rather to lower the standard of morals than to elevate it, and therefore rather to increase than to lessen the number of criminals.

It is said that "without the State there would be no institutions, educational, moral, religious, or international; there would be no means of communication. Were it not for the State, we should be without organizations necessary to all of us."

An argument like this could only have had a basis several centuries ago. If there ever was a time when men had so little international communication, and were so unused to intercourse or interchange of thought that they could not come to an agreement on matters of general interest—commercial, industrial, or economical—without the assistance of the State, such is not the case at present. The widely diffused means of communication and transmission of thought have achieved this result,—that when the modern man desires to found societies, assemblies, corporations, congresses, scientific, economical, or political institutions, not only can he easily dispense with the assistance of governments, but in the majority of cases governments are more

of a hindrance than a help in the pursuit of such objects.

Since the end of the last century almost every progressive movement on the part of mankind has been not only discouraged, but invariably hampered, by governments. Such was the case with the abolition of corporal punishment, torture, and slavery ; with the establishment of freedom of the press and liberty of meeting. Furthermore, State authorities and governments nowadays not only do not coöperate, but they directly hinder the activity by means of which men work out new forms of life. The solution of labor and land questions, of political and religious problems, is not only unencouraged, but distinctly opposed, by the government authority.

"If there were no State and government authority, nations would be subjugated by their neighbors."

It is not worth while to answer this last argument. It refutes itself.

We are told that the government and its armies are necessary for our defense against the neighboring States which might subject us. But all the governments say this of one another ; and yet we know that every European nation professes the same principles of liberty and fraternity, and therefore needs no defense against its neighbor. But if one speaks of defense against barbarians, then one per cent of the troops under arms at the present time would suffice. It is not only that the increase of armed force fails to protect us from danger of attack from our neighbors, it actually provokes the very attack which it deprecates.

Hence no man who reflects on the significance of the State, in whose name he is required to sacrifice his peace, his safety, and his life, can escape the conviction that there is no longer any reasonable ground for such sacrifices.

Even regarding the subject theoretically, a man must realize that the sacrifices demanded by the State are without sufficient reason ; and when he considers the matter from a practical point of view, weighing all the

different conditions in which he has been placed by the State, every man must see that so far as he himself is concerned, the fulfilment of the requirements of the State and his own subjection to military conscription is indubitably and in every case less advantageous for him than if he refused to comply with it. If the majority of people prefer obedience to insubordination, it is not because they have given the subject dispassionate consideration, weighing the advantages and disadvantages, but because they are, so to speak, under the influence of hypnotic suggestion. Men submit to demands like this without using their reason or making the least effort of the will. It requires independent reasoning, as well as effort, to refuse submission, — effort which some men are incapable of making. But supposing we exclude the moral significance of submission and non-submission, and consider only their advantages, then non-submission will always prove more advantageous than submission. Whoever I may be, whether I belong to the well-to-do — the oppressing class — or to the oppressed laboring class, in either case the disadvantages of non-submission are less numerous than the disadvantages of submission, and the advantages of non-submission greater than those of submission.

If I belong to the oppressive, which is the smallest class, and refuse to submit to the demands of the government, I shall be tried as one who refuses to fulfil his obligations, — I shall be tried, and in case my trial terminates favorably, I shall either be declared not guilty, or I may be dealt with as they treat the Menonites in Russia — that is, be compelled to serve my term of military service by performing some non-military work; if, on the contrary, an unfavorable verdict is rendered, I shall be condemned to exile or imprisonment for two or three years (I am speaking of cases in Russia); or possibly my term of imprisonment may be longer. And I may even be condemned to suffer the penalty of death, although that is not at all probable. Such are the disadvantages of non-submission.

The disadvantages of submission are as follows:—

If I am fortunate I shall not be sent to murder men, neither shall I run the risk myself of being disabled or killed; they will simply make a military slave of me. I shall be arrayed in the garments of a clown; my superior officers, from the corporal to the field-marshal, will order me about. At their word of command I shall be put through a series of gymnastic contortions, and after being detained from one to five years I shall be released, but still obliged for ten years longer to hold myself in readiness at any moment I may be summoned to execute the orders these people give me. And if I am less fortunate I shall be sent to the wars, still in the same condition of slavery, and there I shall be forced to slay fellow-men of other countries who never did me any harm. Or I may be sent to a place where I may be mutilated or killed; perhaps find myself, as at Sevastopol, sent to certain death; these things happen in every war. Worse than all things else, I may be sent to fight against my fellow-countrymen, and compelled to kill my own brethren for some matter dynastic or governmental, and to me of foreign interest. Such are the comparative disadvantages.

The comparative advantages of submission and non-submission are as follows:—For him who has submitted the advantages are these: after he has subjected himself to all the degradations and committed all the cruel deeds required of him, he may, provided he be not killed, receive some scarlet or golden bauble to decorate his clown's attire; or if he be especially favored, hundreds of thousands of just such brutal men like himself may be put under his command, and he be called field-marshal, and receive large sums of money.

By refusing to submit he will possess the advantages of preserving his manly dignity, of winning the respect of good men, and, above all, he will enjoy the assurance that he is doing God's business, and therefore an unquestionable benefit to mankind.

Such are the advantages and disadvantages, on either side, for the oppressor, a member of the wealthy class. For a man of the working-class—a poor man—the

advantages and disadvantages are about the same, if we include one important addition to the disadvantages. The special disadvantage for a man of the working-class who has not refused to perform military service is that, when he enters the service, his participation and his tacit consent go toward confirming the oppression in which he finds himself.

But the question concerning the State, whether its continued existence is a necessity, or whether it would be wiser to abolish it, cannot be decided by discussion on its usefulness for the men who are required to support it by taking part in the military service, and still less by weighing the comparative advantages and disadvantages of submission or non-submission for the individual himself. It is decided irrevocably and without appeal by the religious consciousness, by the conscience of each individual, to whom no sooner does military conscription become a question than it is followed by that of the necessity or non-necessity of the State.

CHAPTER VIII

CERTAINTY OF THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF NON-RESISTANCE TO EVIL BY VIOLENCE BY THE MEN OF OUR WORLD

Christianity is not a legislation but a new life-conception; hence it was not obligatory, nor has it been accepted by all men in its full meaning, but only by a few; the rest have accepted it in a corrupted form — Moreover, Christianity is a prophecy of the disappearance of the pagan life, and therefore of the necessity of accepting the Christian doctrine — Non-resistance of evil by violence is one of the principles of the Christian doctrine which must inevitably be accepted by men at the present day — Two methods of solving every struggle — The first method consists in believing the general definitions of evil to be binding upon all, and to resist this evil by violence — The second, the Christian method, consists in not resisting evil by violence — Although the failure of the first method was recognized in the first centuries of Christianity, it is still employed; but as humanity advanced it has become more evident that there is not, nor can there be, a general definition of evil — Now this has become evident to all, and if the violence which is destined to combat evil exists, it is not because it is considered necessary, but because men do not know how to dispense

with it — The difficulty of dispensing with it is due to the skilfulness and complexity of political violence — This violence is supported by four methods: by threats, bribes, hypnotism, and the employment of military force — Deliverance from State violence cannot be accomplished by overthrowing the State — Through experience of the misery of pagan life men are compelled to acknowledge the doctrine of Christ, with its non-resistance to evil, — a doctrine which they have hitherto ignored — To this same necessity of acknowledging the Christian doctrine we are brought by the consciousness of its truth — This consciousness is in utter contradiction to our life, and is especially evident in regard to general military conscription; but, in consequence of habit and the four methods of State violence, men do not see this inconsistency of Christianity with the duties of a soldier — Men do not see it even when the authorities themselves show them plainly all the immorality of the duties of a soldier — The call of the general conscription is the extreme trial for every man, — the command to choose between the Christian doctrine of non-resistance or servile submission to the existing organization of the State — Men generally submit to the demands of the State organization, renouncing all that is sacred, as though there were no other issue — For men of the pagan life-conception, indeed, no other issue does exist; they are compelled to acknowledge it, regardless of all the dreadful calamities of war — Society composed of such men must inevitably perish, and no social changes can save it — The pagan life has reached its last limits; it works its own destruction.

It is frequently said that if Christianity be a truth, it would have been accepted by all men on its first appearance, and would straightway have changed and improved the lives of men. One might as well say that if the seed is alive it must instantly sprout and produce its flower or its fruit.

The Christian doctrine is not a law which, being introduced by violence, can forthwith change the life of mankind. Christianity is a life-conception more lofty and excellent than the ancient; and such a new conception of life cannot be enforced; it must be adopted voluntarily, and by two processes, the spiritual or interior process, and the experimental or external process.

Some men there are — but the smaller proportion — who instantly, and as though by prophetic intuition, divine the truth, surrender themselves to its influence, and live up to its precepts; others — and they are the majority — are brought to the knowledge of the truth, and the necessity for its adoption, by a long series of errors, by experience and suffering.

It is to this necessity of adopting the doctrine by the external process of experience that Christendom has at last arrived.

Now and then one wonders why the mistaken presentment of Christianity, which even at the present time prevents men from accepting it in its true significance, could have been necessary. And yet the very errors, having brought men to their present position, have been the medium through which it has become possible for the majority to accept Christianity in its true meaning.

If instead of that corrupted form of Christianity which was given to the people, it had been offered to them in its purity, the greater portion of mankind would have refused it, like the Asiatic peoples to whom it is yet unknown. But having once accepted it in its corrupted form, the nations embracing it were subjected to its slow but sure influence, and by a long succession of errors, and the suffering that ensued therefrom, have now been brought to the necessity of adopting it in its true meaning.

The erroneous presentation of Christianity, and its acceptance by the majority of mankind, with all its errors, was then a necessity, just as the seed, if it is to sprout, must for a time be buried in the soil.

The Christian doctrine is the doctrine of truth as well as of prophecy.

Eighteen hundred years ago the Christian doctrine revealed to men the true conduct of life, and at the same time foretold the result of disobeying its injunctions and of continuing to pursue their former course, guided only by the precepts which were taught before the dawn of Christianity; and it also showed them what life may become if they accept the Christian doctrine and obey its dictates.

Having taught in the Sermon on the Mount those precepts by which men should order their daily lives, Christ said: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds

blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew vii. 24-27).

And thus, after eighteen centuries, the prophecy has been fulfilled. As the result of the abandonment of Christ's teachings, having disregarded the principle of non-resistance to evil, men have unwittingly fallen into the condition of imminent peril foretold by Christ to those who refused to follow His precepts.

Men often think that the question of resistance or non-resistance to evil by violence is an artificial question, which may be evaded. And yet this is the question that life presents to mankind in general, and to each thinking man in particular, and it is one that must be solved. In social life, ever since Christianity was first preached, this question has been like the doubt that confronts the traveler when he comes to a place where the road which he has followed divides, and he knows not which branch to choose. He must pursue his way, and he can no longer go on without pausing to deliberate, because there are now two roads from which to choose, whereas before there was but one; he must make up his mind which he will take.

In like manner, since the doctrine of Christ has been made known to men, they can no longer say, I will go on living as I did before, without deciding the question of resistance or non-resistance to evil by violence. One must decide at the beginning of every fresh struggle whether one ought or ought not to resist by violence that which one believes to be evil.

The question of resistance or non-resistance of evil by violence arose with the first contest among men, for every contest is simply the resistance by violence of something which each combatant believes to be an evil. But before the time of Christ men did not understand that resistance by violence of whatever the individual

believed to be evil — only the same action which seems evil to one man may seem good to another — is simply one mode of settling the difficulty, and that the other method consists in not resisting evil by violence.

Before the appearance of the doctrine of Christ men believed that there could be but one way of deciding the contest, that of resisting evil by violence, and acted accordingly, while each combatant strove to persuade himself and others that what he regarded as evil was in fact the actual and absolute evil. For this purpose, dating from the oldest times, men began to invent certain definitions of evil which should be obligatory for all, and for the purpose of establishing definitions which should be thus binding, were issued, either certain laws supposed to have been received in a supernatural manner, or commands of individuals or of bodies of men to whom an infallible wisdom was ascribed. Men used violence against their fellow-men and assured themselves and others that they were but using such violence against an evil acknowledged by all.

This was the custom from the most ancient times, particularly among men who had usurped authority, and men have been long in seeing its baselessness.

But the longer mankind existed the more complex grew its mutual relations, and the more evident it became that to resist by violence everything that is considered evil is unwise; that the struggle is not diminished thereby, and that no human wisdom can ever define an infallible standard of evil.

When Christianity first appeared in the Roman Empire it had already become evident to most men that whatever Nero or Caligula called evil, and sought to overcome by violence, was not necessarily an evil for the rest of mankind. Even then men had already begun to realize that the human laws for which a divine origin was claimed were really written by men; that men cannot be infallible, no matter with what external authority they may be invested; and that fallible men will not become infallible because they meet together and call themselves a Senate, or any other similar name. Even

then this had been perceived and understood by many. And it was then that Christ preached His doctrine, which not only embodied the principle of non-resistance, but which revealed a new conception of life, of which the application to social life would lead to the suppression of strife among men, not by obliging one class to yield to whatsoever authority shall ordain, but by forbidding all men, and especially those in power, to employ violence against others.

The doctrine was at that time embraced by a very limited number of disciples, while the majority of men, particularly those who were in authority, although they nominally accepted Christianity, continued to follow the practice of resisting by violence whatever they regarded as evil. So it was during the times of the Roman and Byzantine emperors, and so it went on in later times.

The inconsistency of an authoritative definition of evil and its resistance by violence, already apparent in the first centuries of Christianity, had grown still more evident at the time of the dissolution of the Roman Empire and its subdivision into numerous independent states hostile to one another and torn by internal dissensions.

But men were not yet ready to accept the law of Christ, and the former method of defining an evil to be resisted by the establishment of laws, enforced by coercion and binding upon all men, continued to be employed. The arbiter, whose office it was to decide upon the nature of the evil to be resisted by violence, was alternately the Emperor, the Pope, the elected body, or the nation at large. But both within and without the State men were always to be found who refused to hold themselves bound, either by those laws which were supposed to be the expression of the divine will, or by the human laws which claimed to manifest the will of the people; — men whose views on the subject of evil were quite at variance with those of the existing authorities, men who resisted the authorities, employing the same methods of violence that had been directed against themselves.

Men invested with religious authority would condemn

as evil a matter which to men and institutions invested with a temporal authority commended itself as desirable, and *vice versa*, and more and more furious grew the struggle. And the oftener men had recourse to violence in settling the difficulty, the more evident it became that it was ill chosen, because there is not, nor can there ever be, a standard authority of evil to which all mankind would agree.

Thus matters went on for eighteen centuries, and at last arrived at their present condition, which is, that no man can dispute the fact that an infallible definition of evil will never be made. We have reached the point when men have ceased not only to believe in the possibility of finding a universal definition which all men will admit, but they have even ceased to believe in the necessity of such a definition. We have reached the point when men in authority no longer seek to prove that that which they consider evil is evil, but candidly acknowledge that they consider that to be evil which does not please them, and those who are subject to authority obey, not because they believe that the definitions of evil made by authority are just, but only because they have no power to resist. The annexation of Nice to France, Lorraine to Germany, the Czechs to Austria, the partition of Poland, the subjection of Ireland and India to the English rule, the waging of war against China, the slaughter of Africans, the expulsion of the Chinese, the persecution of the Jews in Russia, or the derivation of profits by landowners from land which they do not cultivate, and by capitalists from the results of labor performed by others, — none of all this is done because it is virtuous, or because it will benefit mankind and is essentially opposed to evil, but because those who hold authority will have it so. The result at the present time is this: certain men use violence, no longer in the name of resistance to evil, but from caprice, or because it is for their advantage; while certain other men submit to violence, not because they believe, like those of former ages, that violence is used to defend them from evil, but simply because they cannot escape it.

If a Roman, or a man of the Middle Ages, or a Russian, such a man as I can remember fifty years ago, believed implicitly that the existing violence of authority was needed to save him from evil, — that taxes, duties, serfdom, prisons, the lash, the knout, galleys, executions, military conscription, and wars were unavoidable, — it would be difficult to find a man at the present time who believes that all the violences committed saves a single man from evil; on the contrary, not one could be found who had not a distinct assurance that most of the violations to which he is subjected, and in which he himself participates, are in themselves a great and unprofitable calamity.

There is hardly a man to be found at the present time who fails to realize all the uselessness and absurdity of collecting taxes from the laboring classes for the purpose of enriching idle officials; or the folly of punishing weak and immoral men by exile or imprisonment, where, supported as they are, and living in idleness, they become still weaker and more depraved; or, again, the unspeakable folly and cruelty of those preparations for war, which can neither be explained nor justified, and which ruin and imperil the safety of nations. Nevertheless these violations continue, and the very men who realize and even suffer from their uselessness, absurdity, and cruelty, contribute to their encouragement.

If fifty years ago it was possible that the wealthy man of leisure and the illiterate laborer should both believe that their positions, the one a continual holiday, the other a life of incessant labor, were ordained by God — in these days, not only throughout Europe, and even in Russia, owing to the activity of the people, the growth of education, and the art of printing, it is hardly possible to find a man, either rich or poor, who in one way or another would not question the justice of such an order of things. Not only do the rich realize that the possession of wealth is in itself a fault, for which they strive to atone by donations to science and art, as formerly they redeemed their sins by endowing churches; but even the majority of the laboring class now understand

that the existing order is false, and should be altered, if not abolished. Men who profess religion, of whom we have millions in Russia, the so-called sectarians, acknowledge, because they interpret the gospel doctrine correctly, that this order of things is false and should be destroyed. The working-men consider it false because of the socialistic, communistic, or anarchical theories that have already found way into their ranks. In these days the principle of violence is maintained, not because it is considered necessary, but simply because it has been so long in existence, and is so thoroughly organized by those who profit by it—that is to say, by the governments and ruling classes—that those who are in their power find it impossible to escape.

Nowadays every government, the despotic as well as the most liberal, has become what Herzen has so cleverly termed a Genghis Khan with a telegraphic equipment, that is, with an organization of violence, having for basis nothing less than the most brutal tyranny, and converting all the means invented by science for the inter-communication and peaceful activities of free and equal men to its own tyrannous and oppressive ends.

The existing governments and the ruling classes no longer care to present even the semblance of justice, but rely, thanks to scientific progress, on an organization so ingenious that it is able to inclose all men within a circle of violence through which it is impossible to break. This circle is made up of four expedients, each connected with and supporting the other like the rings of a chain.

The first and the oldest expedient is intimidation. It consists in representing the actual organization of the State, whether it be that of a liberal republic or of an arbitrary despotism, as something sacred and immutable, which therefore punishes by the most cruel penalties any attempt at revolution. This expedient has been put into practice recently wherever a government exists: in Russia against the so-called nihilists, in America against the anarchists, in France against the imperialists, monarchists, communists, and anarchists. Rail-

roads, telegraphs, telephones, photography, the improved method of disposing of criminals by imprisoning them in solitary confinement for the remainder of their lives in cells, where, hidden from human view, they die forgotten, as well as numerous other modern inventions upon which governments have the prior claim, give them such power, that if once the authority fell into certain hands, and the regular and secret police, administrative officials, and all kinds of procureurs, jailers, and executioners labored zealously to support it, there would be no possibility whatsoever of overthrowing the government, however cruel or senseless it might be.

The second expedient is bribery. This consists in taking the property of the laboring classes by means of taxation and distributing it among the officials, who, in consideration of this, are bound to maintain and increase the bondage of the people. The bribed officials, from the prime ministers to the lowest scribes, form one unbroken chain of individuals, united by a common interest, supported by the labor of the people, fulfilling the will of the government with a submission proportionate to their gains, never hesitating to use any means in any department of business to promote the action of that governmental violence on which their well-being rests.

The third expedient I can call by no other name than hypnotism. It consists in retarding the spiritual development of men, and, by means of various suggestions, influencing them to cling to the theory of life which mankind has already left behind, and upon which rests the foundation of governmental authority. We have at the present time a hypnotizing system, organized in a most complex manner, beginning in childhood and continued until the hour of death. This hypnotism begins during the early years of a man's life in a system of compulsory education. Children receive in school the same ideas in regard to the universe which their ancestors entertained, and which are in direct contradiction to contemporary knowledge. In countries where a State religion exists, children are taught the senseless and sacrilegious utterances of church catechisms, with

the duty of obedience to authorities; in the republics they are taught the absurd superstition of patriotism, and the same obligation of obedience to the government. In maturer years this hypnotizing process is continued by the encouragement of religious and patriotic superstition. Religious superstition is encouraged by the erection of churches built from money collected from the people, by holidays, processions, painting, architecture, music, by incense that stupefies the brain, and, above all, by the maintenance of the so-called clergy, whose duty consists in befogging the minds of men and keeping them in a continual state of imbecility, what with the solemnity of their services, their sermons, their intervention with the private lives of men in time of marriage, birth, and death. The patriotic superstition is encouraged by the governments and the ruling classes by instituting national festivals, spectacles, and holidays, by erecting monuments with money collected from the people, which will influence men to believe in the exclusive importance and greatness of their own State or country and its rulers, and encourage a feeling of hostility and even of hatred toward other nations. Furthermore, autocratic governments directly forbid the printing and circulation of books and the delivery of speeches that might enlighten men; and those teachers who have the power to rouse the people from its torpor are either banished or imprisoned. And every government, without exception, conceals from the masses all that would tend to set them free, and encourages all that would demoralize them, — all those writings, for instance, that tend to confirm them in the crudeness of their religious and patriotic superstition; all kinds of sensual pleasures, shows, circuses, theaters; and all means for producing physical stupor, especially those, like tobacco or brandy, which are among the principal sources of national income. Even prostitution is encouraged; it is not only recognized, but organized by the majority of governments. Such is the third expedient.

The fourth expedient consists in this: certain individuals are selected from among the mass of enslaved and

stupefied beings, and these, after having been subjected to a still more vigorous process of brutalization, are made the passive instruments of the cruelties and brutalities indispensable to the government. This state of brutality and imbecility is produced by taking men in their youth, before they have yet had time to gain any clear conception of morality; and then, having removed them from all the natural conditions of human life, from home, family, birthplace, and the possibility of intelligent labor, by shutting them up together in barracks, where, dressed in a peculiar uniform, to the accompaniment of shouts, drums, music, and the display of glittering gewgaws, they are daily forced to perform certain prescribed evolutions. By these methods they are reduced to that hypnotic condition when they cease to be men and become imbecile and docile machines in the hands of the hypnotizer. These physically strong young men thus hypnotized (and at the present time, with the general conscription system, all young men answer to this description), supplied with murderous weapons, ever obedient to the authority of the government, and ready at its command to commit any violence whatsoever, constitute the fourth and the principal means for subjugating men. So the circle of violence is completed.

Intimidation, bribery, and hypnotism force men to become soldiers; soldiers give power and make it possible to execute and to rob mankind (with the aid of bribed officials), as well as to hypnotize and to recruit men who are in their turn to become soldiers.

The circle is complete, and there is no possibility of escape from it.

If some men believe that deliverance from violence, or even a certain abatement of its energy, may be the result of its overthrow by the oppressed, who will then replace it by a system which will require no such violence and subjugation, and if, so believing, they attempt to bring this about, they only deceive themselves and others. So far from improving the position, these attempts will only render things worse.

The activity of such men only strengthens the

despotism of governments by giving the latter a convenient pretext for increasing their defenses. For even when, following a train of circumstances highly demoralizing to the government, — take the case of France in 1870, for example, — a government is overthrown by violence and the authority passes into other hands, this new authority is by no means likely to be less oppressive than the former. On the contrary, obliged to defend itself from its exasperated and overthrown enemies, it will be even more cruel and despotic than its predecessor, as has ever been the case in periods of revolution.

If socialists and communists believe that the possession of individual capital is a pernicious influence in society, and anarchists regard government itself as an evil, there are, on the other hand, monarchists, conservatives, and capitalists who look upon the social and communal state as an evil order of society, no less than anarchy itself; and all these parties have nothing better to offer by way of reconciling mankind than violence. Thus, whichever party gains the upper hand, it will be forced, in order to introduce and maintain its own system, not only to avail itself of all former methods of violence, but to invent new ones as well. It simply means a change of slavery with new victims and a new organization; but the violence will remain, — nay, increase, — because human hatred, intensified by the struggle, will devise new means for reducing the conquered to subjection. This has always been the result of every revolution and violent overthrow of government. Each struggle serves but to increase the power of those in authority at the time to enslave their fellow-men.

One domain of human activity, and only one, has hitherto escaped the encroachments of the governments — the domain of the family, the economical domain of private life and domestic labor. But now even this domain, in consequence of the struggle of socialists and communists, is gradually passing into the hands of the governments, so that labor and recreation, the dwellings, clothes, and food of the people will by

degrees, if the desires of the reformers are accomplished, be determined and regulated by the government.

The long experiment of Christian life by nation after nation, during eighteen centuries, has inevitably brought men to the necessity of deciding whether the doctrine of Christ is to be accepted or refused, and of deciding, too, the question of social life dependent thereupon, — the resistance or non-resistance of evil by violence. But there is this difference, — that formerly men could either accept or reject the decision given by Christianity, whereas now it has become imperative, because it affords the sole means of deliverance from that condition of slavery in which, as in a net, men find themselves entangled.

Nor is it alone this sad plight that brings them to this necessity.

Parallel with the negative proof of the falsehood of the pagan order of things there has been positive proof of the truth of the Christian doctrine.

Indeed, in the course of the eighteen centuries, the best men in all Christendom, through an inner spiritual medium, having recognized the truths of the doctrine, have borne witness of it, regardless of threats, privations, miseries, and torture. These nobler men, by their martyrdom, have sealed the truth of the doctrine.

Christianity penetrated into human consciousness, not alone by the method of negative proof, that, namely, it had become impossible to go on with the pagan life; but by its simplifying process, by its explanation of, and its deliverance from, superstition, and by its consequent spread among all classes of society.

Eighteen centuries of the profession of Christianity have not passed in vain for those who accepted it, even if it were but in outward form. These eighteen centuries have made men realize all the miseries of the pagan state, even though they have continued to lead a pagan existence, out of harmony with an age of humanity; and at the bottom of their hearts they believe now (and herein lies the only reason for living at all) that salvation from

such an existence can be found in the fulfilment of the Christian doctrine in its true sense. As to when and where this salvation is to be accomplished, opinions differ, according to the intellectual development of men and the prejudices among which they live; but every educated man recognizes that our salvation is to be found in the fulfilment of the Christian doctrine. Certain believers, those who consider the Christian doctrine divine, affirm that this salvation will be accomplished when all men believe in Christ and the time of the second advent approaches; others, who also have faith in the divinity of Christ's doctrine, believe that this salvation will come through the churches, which, having got all men within the fold, will implant in their hearts those Christian virtues which will transform their lives. Others, again, who do not accept the divinity of Christ, believe that the salvation of men will be accomplished by means of a slow, continuous progress, during which the groundwork of pagan life will be gradually replaced by the groundwork of liberty, equality, and fraternity—that is, by the basis of Christianity. Still others there are who preach a new social organization, and who believe that this salvation will be brought about when, by means of a violent revolution, men are forced to a community of goods, to the abolition of governments, to collective rather than individual labor—that is, by the realization of one of the aspects of Christianity. Thus, after one fashion or another, all men of our epoch not only renounce the existing order of life as no longer suited to the times, but acknowledge, often without realizing it, and regarding themselves as enemies of Christianity, that our salvation lies only in the adaptation to life of a whole or a part of the Christian doctrine in its true sense.

For the majority of men Christianity, as its Teacher has expressed it, could not be comprehended at once, but was to grow, like unto a huge tree, from the tiniest seed. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, ... which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and

becometh a tree." And thus it has grown and continues to grow, if not in manifestation, then in human consciousness.

It is no longer reserved for the minority of men, who have always understood Christianity by its veritable truth; but it is acknowledged by the great majority, who, if we are to judge by their social life, are far removed from it.

Look at the private life of individuals, listen to their estimation of human actions as they pronounce judgment on each other; listen not only to public sermons and orations, but to the precepts which parents and teachers offer to their charges, and you will see that, however far removed from the practice of Christian truths may be the political or social existence of men who are in bonds to violence, yet Christian virtues are admired and exalted by all; while, on the contrary, the anti-Christian vices are unhesitatingly condemned as harmful to all mankind. Those who sacrifice their lives in the service of humanity are looked upon as the better men; while those who take advantage of the misfortune of their neighbors to further their own selfish interests are universally condemned.

There may still be men who, insensible to Christian ideals, have set up for themselves other ideals, such as power, courage, or wealth; but these ideals are passing away; they are not accepted by all, nor by the men of the better class. Indeed, the Christian ideals are the only ones which are recognized as obligatory for all.

The position of our Christian world, looked at from without, with its cruelty and slavery, is indeed appalling. But if we consider it from the standpoint of human consciousness, it presents a very different aspect. All the evil of our life seems to exist only because it always has existed from all ages, and the men whose actions are evil have had neither the time nor the experience to overcome their evil habits, although all are willing to abandon them. Evil seems to exist by reason of some cause apparently independent of the consciousness of men.

Strange and contradictory as it may seem, modern men hate the very order of things which they themselves support.

I believe it is Max Müller who describes the astonishment of an Indian converted to Christianity, who, having apprehended the essence of the Christian doctrine, came to Europe and beheld the life of Christians. He could not recover from his astonishment in the presence of the reality, so different from the state of things he had expected to find among Christian nations.

If we are not surprised at the contradiction between our convictions and our actions, it is only because the influences which obscure this contradiction act upon us. We have but to look at our life from the standpoint of the Indian, who understood Christianity in its true significance, without any concessions or adaptations, and to behold the barbarous cruelties with which our life is filled, in order to be horrified at the contradictions in the midst of which we live, without noticing them.

One has but to remember the preparations for war, the cartridge-boxes, the silver-plated bullets, the torpedoes, and — the Red Cross; the establishment of prisons for solitary confinement, experiments with *electrocution*, and — the care for the welfare of the prisoners; the philanthropic activity of the rich, and — their daily life, which brings about the existence of the poor, whom they seek to benefit. And these contradictions arise, not, as it might seem, because men pretend to be Christians while they are actually heathens, but because they lack something, or because there is some power which prevents them from being what they really desire to be, and what they even conscientiously believe themselves to be. It is not that modern men merely pretend to hate oppression, the inequality of class distinctions, and all kinds of cruelty, whether practised against their fellow-men or against animals. They *are* sincere in their hatred of these abuses; but they do not know how to abolish them, or they lack the courage to alter their own mode of life, which depends upon all this, and which seems to them so important.

Ask, indeed, any individual if he considers it praiseworthy or even honorable for a man to fill a position for which he receives a salary so high as to be out of all proportion to the amount of his labor, as, for instance, that of collecting from the people, often from beggars, taxes which are to be devoted to the purchase of cannon, torpedoes, and other instruments for murdering the men with whom we wish to live in peace, and who wish to live in peace with us; or, to receive a salary for spending his life either in perfecting these instruments of murder, or in the military exercises by which men are trained for slaughter? Ask whether it be praiseworthy or compatible with the dignity of man, or becoming to a Christian, to undertake, also for money, to arrest some unfortunate man, some illiterate drunkard, for some petty theft not to be compared with the magnitude of our own appropriation, or for manslaughter not conducted by our advanced methods; and for such offenses to throw people into prison, or put them to death? Ask whether it be laudable and becoming in a man and a Christian, also for money, to teach the people foolish and injurious superstitions instead of the doctrine of Christ? Whether, again, it be laudable and worthy of a man to wrench from his neighbor, in order to gratify his own caprice, the very necessities of life, as the great landowners do; or to exact from his fellow-man an excessive and exhausting toil for the purpose of increasing his own wealth, as the mill-owners and manufacturers do; or to take advantage of human necessities to build up colossal fortunes, as the merchants do?

Every individual would reply not, especially if the question regarded his neighbor. And at the same time the very man who acknowledges all the ignominy of such deeds, when the case is presented to him, will often, of his own accord, and for no advantage of a salary, but moved by childish vanity, the desire to possess a trinket of enamel, a decoration, a stripe, voluntarily enter the military service, or become an examining magistrate, a justice of the peace, a minister of state, an *uriadnik*, a

bishop, accepting an office whose duties will oblige him to do things, the shame and ignominy of which he cannot help realizing.

Many of these men will, I am sure, defend themselves on the ground of the lawfulness and necessity of their position ; they will argue that the authorities are of God, that the functions of State are indispensable for the good of mankind, that Christianity is not opposed to wealth, that the rich youth was bidden to give up his goods only if he wished to be perfect, that the present distribution of wealth and commerce is beneficial to all men, and that it is right and lawful. But however much they may try to deceive themselves and others, they all know that what they do is opposed to the highest interests of life, and at the bottom of their hearts, when they listen only to their consciences, they are ashamed and pained to think of what they are doing, especially when the baseness of their deeds has been pointed out to them. A man in modern life, whether he does or does not profess to believe in the divinity of Christ, must know that to be instrumental either as a czar, minister, governor, or policeman, as in selling a poor family's last cow to pay taxes to the treasury, the money of which is devoted to the purchase of cannon or to pay the salaries or pensions of idle and luxurious officials, is to do more harm than good ; or to be a party to the imprisonment of the father of a family, for whose demoralization we are ourselves responsible, and to bring his family to beggary ; or to take part in piratical and murderous warfare ; or to teach absurd superstitions of idol-worship instead of the doctrine of Christ ; or to impound a stray cow belonging to a man who has no land ; or to deduct the value of an accidentally injured article from the wages of a mechanic ; or to sell something to a poor man for double its value, only because he is in dire necessity ; — the men of our modern life cannot but know that all such deeds are wrong, shameful, and that they ought not to commit them. They do all know it. They know that they are doing wrong, and would abstain from it, had they but the strength to oppose

those forces which blind them to the criminality of their actions while drawing them on to do wrong.

But there is nothing that demonstrates so vividly the degree of contradiction to which human life has attained as the system that embodies both the method and the expression of violence, — the general conscription system. It is only because a general armament and military conscription have come imperceptibly and by slow degrees, and that governments employ for their support all the means of intimidation at their disposal, — bribery, bewilderment, and violence, — that we do not realize the glaring contradiction between this state of affairs and those Christian feelings and ideas with which all modern men are penetrated.

This contradiction has become so common that we fail to see the shocking imbecility and immorality of the actions, not only of those men who, of their own accord, choose the profession of murder as something honorable, but of those unfortunates who consent to serve in the army, and of those who, in countries where military conscription has not yet been introduced, give of their own free will the fruits of their labor to be used for the payment of mercenaries and for the organization for murder. All these men are either Christians or men professing humanitarianism and liberalism, who know that they participate in the most imbecile, aimless, and cruel murders; yet still they go on committing them. But this is not all. In Germany, where the system of general military conscription originated, Caprivi has revealed something that has always been carefully hidden: that the men who run the risk of being killed are not only foreigners, but are quite as likely to be fellow-countrymen, — working-men, — from which class most of the soldiers are obtained. Nevertheless, this admission neither opened men's eyes nor shocked their sensibilities. They continue just as they did before, to go like sheep, and submit to anything that is demanded of them. And this is not all. The German Emperor has recently explained with minute precision the character and vocation of a soldier, having distinguished, thanked, and rewarded

a private for killing a defenseless prisoner who attempted to escape. In thanking and rewarding a man for an act which is looked upon even by men of the lowest type of morality as base and cowardly, Wilhelm pointed out that the principal duty of a soldier, and one most highly prized by the authorities, is that of an executioner, — not like the professional executioners who put to death condemned prisoners only, but an executioner of the innocent men whom his superiors order him to kill.

Yet more. In 1891 this same Wilhelm, the *enfant terrible* of State authority, who expresses what other men only venture to think, in a talk with certain soldiers, uttered publicly the following words, which were repeated the next day in thousands of papers: —

“Recruits! You have given *me* the oath of allegiance before the altar and the servant of the Lord. You are still too young to comprehend the true meaning of what has been said here, but first of all take care ever to follow the orders and instructions that are given to you. You have taken the oath of allegiance to *me*; this means, children of my guards, that you are now *my* soldiers, that you have given yourselves up to me, body and soul.

“But one enemy exists for you — *my* enemy. With the present socialistic intrigues *it may happen that I shall command you to shoot your own relatives, your brothers, even your parents* (from which may God preserve us!), *and then you are in duty bound to obey my orders unhesitatingly.*”

This man expresses what is known, but carefully concealed, by all wise rulers. He says outright that the men who serve in the army serve *him* and *his* advantage, and should be ready for that purpose to kill their brothers and fathers.

Roughly but distinctly he lays bare all the horror of the crime for which men who become soldiers prepare themselves, — all that abyss of self-abasement into which they fling themselves when they promise obedience. Like a bold hypnotizer, he tests the depth of the slumber; he applies red-hot iron to the sleeper's body; it smokes and shrivels, but the sleeper does not awaken.

Poor, sick, miserable man, intoxicated with power, who

by these words insults all that is sacred to men of modern civilization! And we, Christians, liberals, men of culture, so far from feeling indignant at this insult, pass it over in silence. Men are put to the final test in its rudest form; but they hardly observe that a test is in question, that a choice is put before them. It seems to them as if there were no choice, but only the one necessity of slavish submission. It would seem as if these insane words, offensive to all that a civilized human being holds sacred, ought to rouse indignation, — but nothing of the kind happens. Year after year every young man in Europe is subjected to the same test, and with very few exceptions they all forswear what is and should be sacred to every man; all manifest a readiness to kill their brothers and even their fathers, at the order of the first misguided man who wears a red and gold livery, asking only when and whom they are to be ordered to kill — for they are ready to do it.

Even by savages certain objects are held sacred, for whose sake they are ready to suffer rather than submit. But what is sacred for the man of the modern world? He is told: Be my slave, in a bondage where you may have to murder your own father; and he, oftentimes a man of learning, who has studied all the sciences in the university, submissively offers his neck to the halter. He is dressed in a clown's garments, ordered to leap, to make contortions, to salute, to kill — and he submissively obeys; and when at last allowed to return to his former life, he continues to hold forth on the dignity of man, freedom, equality, and brotherhood.

"But what is to be done?" we often hear men ask in perplexity. "If every man were to refuse, it would be a different matter; but, as it is, I should suffer alone without benefiting any one." And they are right; for a man who holds the social life-conception cannot refuse. Life has no significance for him except as it concerns his personal welfare; it is for his advantage to submit, therefore he does so.

To whatever torture or injury he may be subjected he will submit, because he can do nothing alone; he lacks

the foundation which alone would enable him to resist violence, and those who are in authority over him will never give him the chance of uniting with others.

It has often been said that the invention of the terrible military instruments of murder will put an end to war, and that war will exhaust itself. This is not true. As it is possible to increase the means for killing men, so it is possible to increase the means for subjecting those who hold the social life-conception. Let them be exterminated by thousands and millions, let them be torn to pieces, men will still continue like stupid cattle to go to the slaughter, some because they are driven thither under the lash, others that they may win the decorations and ribbons which fill their hearts with pride.

And it is with material like this that the public leaders — conservatives, liberals, socialists, anarchists — discuss the ways and means of organizing an intelligent and moral society, with men who have been so thoroughly confused and bewildered that they will promise to murder their own parents. What kind of intelligence and morality can there be in a society organized from material like this? Just as it is impossible to build a house from bent and rotten timber, however manipulated, so also is it impossible with such materials to organize an intelligent and moral society. They can only be governed like a drove of cattle, by the shouts and lash of the herdsman. And so, indeed, they are governed.

Again, while on the one hand we find men, Christians in name, professing the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, on the other hand we see these same men ready, in the name of liberty, to yield the most abject and slavish obedience; in the name of equality, to approve of the most rigid and senseless subdivision of men into classes; and in the name of fraternity, ready to slay their own brothers.¹

¹ The fact that some nations, like the English and American, have no general conscription system (although one hears already voices in its favor), but a system of recruiting and hiring soldiers, nowise alters the case as regards the slavery of the citizens under the government. In the former system every man must go himself to kill or be killed; in the latter, he must give the proceeds of his labor to employ and drill murderers.

The contradiction of the moral consciousness, and hence the misery of life, has reached its utmost limit, beyond which it can go no further. Life, based on principles of violence, has culminated in the negation of the basis on which it was founded. The organization, on principles of violence, of a society whose object was to insure the happiness of the individual and the family, and the social welfare of humanity, has brought men to such a pass that these benefits are practically annulled.

The first part of the prophecy in regard to those men and their descendants who adopted this doctrine has been fulfilled, and now their descendants are forced to realize the justice of its second part.

CHAPTER IX

THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE-CONCEPTION DELIVERS MEN FROM THE MISERIES OF OUR PAGAN LIFE

The external life of Christian nations remains pagan, but they are already penetrated by the Christian life-conception — The issue from this contradiction is in the acceptance of the Christian life-conception — In it alone is every man free, and it alone frees him from all human authority — This deliverance is brought about, not by a change of external conditions, but only by a change in the conception of one's life — The Christian life-conception demands the renunciation of violence, and, in delivering the man who accepts it, it frees the world from all external authority — The issue from the present apparently hopeless position consists in every man accepting the Christian life-conception and living accordingly — But men consider this method too slow, and see their salvation in change of the material conditions of life made with the aid of the authority of the State — This method will have no issue, because men themselves cause the evil from which they suffer — This is especially evident in regard to the submissive acceptance of military duty, for it is more advantageous for a man to refuse than accept — Human freedom will be brought about only through the liberation of each individual man, and already there are signs of this liberation, which threatens to destroy State organization — The repudiation of the un-Christian demands of governments undermines their authority and makes men free — Therefore instances of such refusals are feared by governments more than conspiracies or violence — Instances, in Russia, of refusals to take the oath of allegiance, to pay taxes, to accept passports or positions in the police, to take part

in courts of law, or to be drafted as soldiers — Similar instances in other countries — Governments know not how to dispose of men who refuse to obey their requirements because of the Christian doctrine — These men destroy without a struggle the foundations of governments from the inside — To punish them would mean for governments to deny Christianity themselves, and to contribute to the diffusion of that consciousness from which such refusals spring — Hence the position of governments is a desperate one, and men who preach the uselessness of personal deliverance only arrest the destruction of the existing system of government founded on violence.

THE Christian nations of the present day are in a position no less cruel than that of pagan times. In many respects, especially in the matter of oppression, their position has grown worse.

A contrast like that of modern and ancient times may be seen in the vegetation of the last days of autumn as compared with that of the early days of spring. In the autumn the outward decay and death correspond to the interior process, which is the suspension of life; in the spring the apparent lifelessness is in direct contradiction to the real vitality within, and the approaching transition to new forms of life.

And thus it is as regards the apparent resemblance between pagan life and that of the present day. It exists only in appearance. The inner lives of men in the times of paganism were quite unlike those of the men of our days.

In the former the external aspect of cruelty and slavery corresponded with the inner consciousness of men, a conformity which only increased as time went on; in the latter the external condition of cruelty and slavery is in utter contradiction to the Christian consciousness of men, a contradiction which grows more and more striking every year.

The misery and suffering resulting therefrom seem so useless. It is like prolonged suffering in child-labor. Everything is ready for the coming life, and yet no life appears.

Apparently the situation is without deliverance. It would indeed be so were it not that to men, and therefore to the world, there has been vouchsafed the capac-

ity for a loftier conception of life, which has the power to set free, and at once, from all fetters, however firmly riveted.

And this is the Christian life-conception presented to men 1800 years ago.

A man has but to assimilate this life-conception and he will be set free, as a matter of course, from the fetters that now restrain him, and feel free as a bird who spreads his wings and flies over the wall that has kept him a prisoner.

They talk of setting the Christian Church free from the State, of granting freedom to or withholding it from Christians. Such thoughts and expressions are strangely misleading. Liberty can neither be granted to nor withheld from a Christian or Christians.

But if there is a question of granting or withholding liberty, then evidently it is not the true Christians who are meant, but only men who call themselves by that name. A Christian cannot help being free, because in the pursuit and attainment of his object no one can either hinder or retard him.

A man has but to understand his life as Christianity teaches him to understand it; that is, he must realize that it does not belong to himself, nor to his family, nor to the State, but to Him who sent him into the world; he must therefore know that it is his duty to live, not in accordance with the law of his own personality, nor of that of his family or State, but to fulfil the infinite law of Him who gave him life, in order to feel himself so entirely free from all human authority that he will cease to regard it as a possible obstacle.

A man needs but to realize that the object of his life is the fulfilment of God's law; then the preëminence of that law, claiming as it does his entire allegiance, will of necessity invalidate the authority and restrictions of all human laws.

The Christian who contemplates that law of love implanted in every human soul, and quickened by Christ, the only guide for all mankind, is set free from human authority.

A Christian may suffer from external violence, may be deprived of his personal freedom, may be a slave to his passions, — the man who commits sin is the slave of the sin, — but he cannot be controlled or coerced by threats into committing an act contrary to his consciousness. He cannot be forced to this, because the privations and sufferings that are so powerful an influence over men who hold the social life-conception have no influence whatever over him. The privations and sufferings that destroy the material welfare which is the object of the social life-conception produce no effect upon the welfare of the Christian's life, which rests on the consciousness that he is doing God's will — nay, they may even serve to promote that welfare when they are visited upon him for fulfilling that will.

A Christian, therefore, who submits to the inner, the divine law, is not only unable to execute the biddings of the outward law when they are at variance with his consciousness of God's law of love, as in the case of the demands made upon him by the government; but he cannot acknowledge the obligation of obeying any individual whomsoever, cannot acknowledge himself to be what is called a subject. For a Christian to promise to subject himself to any government whatsoever — a subjection which may be considered the foundation of State life — is a direct negation of Christianity; since an individual who promises beforehand to obey implicitly every law that men may enact, by that promise utters an emphatic denial of Christianity, whose very essence is obedience in all contingencies to the law which he feels to be within him — the law of love.

With the pagan life-conception it was possible to promise to obey the will of temporal authorities without violating the laws of God, which were supposed to consist in carrying out such customs as circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath, the utterance of prayer at certain periods, abstinence from certain kinds of food, etc. The one did not contradict the other. But Christianity differs from paganism inasmuch as its requirements are not of an external or negative charac-

ter; on the contrary, they are such as reverse man's former relations toward his fellow-men, and may call for acts on his part which could not be anticipated, and consequently are not defined. Hence it is that a Christian can neither promise to obey nor to disobey the will of another, ignorant as he must be of the nature of its requirements; not only must he refuse to obey human laws, but he cannot promise to do or abstain from doing anything definite at any given time, because he can never tell at what hour or in what manner the Christian law of love, on which his life-conception is based, will demand his coöperation. A Christian, promising in advance to obey unconditionally the laws of men, admits by that promise that the inner law of God does not constitute for him the sole law of his life.

When a Christian promises to obey the commands or laws of men, he is like a craftsman who, having hired himself out to one master, promises at the same time to execute the orders of other persons. No man can serve two masters.

A Christian is freed from human authority by acknowledging the supremacy of one authority alone, that of God, whose law, revealed to him through Christ, he recognizes within himself, and obeys,—that and no other.

And this deliverance is accomplished neither by means of a struggle, nor by the destruction of previous customs of life, but only through a change in his life-conception. The deliverance proceeds, in the first place, from the Christian's acknowledgment of the law of love, as revealed to him by his Teacher, which suffices to determine the relations of men, and according to which every act of violence seems superfluous and unlawful. Secondly, because those privations and miseries, or the anticipations of such, which influence a man who holds the social life-conception and reduces him to obedience, seem to him no more than the inevitable consequences of existence, which he would never dream of opposing by violence, but bears patiently, as

he would bear disease, hunger, or any other misery; which, indeed, have no possible influence over his actions. The Christian's only guide must be the divine indwelling element, subject neither to restriction nor to control.

A Christian lives in accordance with the words spoken by the Master: "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, *till he send forth judgment unto victory.*"¹

A Christian enters into no dispute with his neighbor, he neither attacks nor uses violence; on the contrary, he suffers violence himself without resistance, and by his very attitude toward evil not only sets himself free, but helps to free the world at large from all outward authority.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."² If there were any doubt of the truth of Christianity there could be no more indubitable proof of its authenticity than the complete freedom, recognizing no fetters, which a man feels as soon as he assimilates the Christian life-conception.

Human beings in their present condition may be likened to bees in the act of swarming, as we see them clinging in a mass to a single bough. Their position is a temporary one, and must inevitably be changed. They must rise and find themselves a new abode. Every bee knows this, and is eager to shift its own position, as well as that of the others, but not one of them will do so until the whole swarm rises. The swarm cannot rise, because one bee clings to the other and prevents it from separating itself from the swarm, and so they all continue to hang. It might seem as if there were no deliverance from this position, precisely as it seems to men of the world who have become entangled in the social net. Indeed, there would be no outlet for the bees if each one were not a living creature possessed of a pair of wings. Neither would there be any issue

¹ Matthew xii. 19, 20.

² John viii. 32.

for men if each one were not a living individual, being gifted with a capacity for assimilating the Christian life-conception.

If among these bees who are able to fly not one could be found willing to start, the swarm would never change its position. And it is the same among men. If the man who has assimilated the Christian life-conception waits for others before he proceeds to live in accordance with it, mankind will never change its attitude. And as all that is needed to change a solid mass of bees into a flying swarm is for one bee to spread its wings and fly away, when the second, the third, the tenth, and the hundredth will follow suit; so all that is needed to break through the magic circle of social life, deliverance from which seems so hopeless, is, that one man should view life from a Christian standpoint and begin to frame his own life accordingly, whereupon others will follow in his footsteps.

But men think that the deliverance of mankind by this method is too slow a process, and that a simultaneous deliverance might be effected by some other method. Just as if bees, when the swarm was ready to rise, were to decide that it would be too long a process if they waited for each bee to spread its wings and rise separately, and that some means must be devised whereby the swarm may rise all at once, whenever it pleases. But that is impossible. Not until the first, second, third, and hundredth bee has unfolded its wings and flown away can the swarm take flight and find for itself a new home. Not until each individual man adopts the Christian life-conception, and begins to live in conformity with its precepts, will the contradictions of human life be solved, and new forms of life become established.

One of the most striking events of our time is the propaganda of slavery which is spread among the masses, not only by the government, to whom it is of use, but by those exponents of socialistic theories who consider themselves the champions of freedom.

These men preach that the amelioration in the conditions of life, the reconciliation between actuality and

consciousness, will not be brought about by the personal efforts of individual men, but that it will evolve itself out of a certain forced reorganization of society by some unknown influence. Their theory is that men should not proceed of their own accord to the place where they wish to go, but that they should have a platform built under their feet, upon which they may be carried to the spot they desire to reach. Hence they must not move as far as their strength will permit, but all their efforts must be directed toward building this imaginary platform without stirring from their position.

There is a theory in economics preached in these days of which the essential principle is this: the worse the condition of affairs, the better the prospect; the greater the accumulation of capital and oppression of the working-man resulting therefrom, the nearer the day of deliverance; and therefore any effort on the part of the individual to free himself from the oppression of capital is useless. In regard to the government it is declared that the greater its authority, which, according to this theory, should include the domain of private life, hitherto uninvaded, the better it will be, and hence one should solicit the interference of governments with private life. In regard to international politics, it is declared that the increase of armies and modes of extermination will lead to the necessity of a general disarmament through the agency of congresses, arbitration, etc. And the most surprising part of all is that human lethargy is so profound that men credit these theories, although the whole structure of life, and every stage in human progress, demonstrate their fallacy.

Men suffer from oppression, and by way of deliverance certain expedients are suggested for the improvement of their condition, these means of relief to be administered by authority, to which they continue to submit. This will naturally tend to augment authority and to increase the consequent oppression of government.

Of all the errors of humanity there is none that so retards its progress as this. Men will do anything in the world to achieve their purpose save the one simple

deed, which it is every man's duty to perform. Men will invent the most ingenious devices for changing the position which is burdensome to them, but never dream of the simple remedy of abstaining from the acts which cause it.

I was told of an incident which happened to an intrepid *stanovoy*, who, on arriving in a village where the peasants had revolted, and whither troops had been sent, undertook, like the Emperor Nicholas I., to quell the disturbance by his personal influence. He ordered several loads of rods to be brought, and having gathered all the peasants into the barn, he entered himself, shut himself in with them, and so terrified them by his shouts and threats that in compliance with his commands they began to flog each other. And so they went on flogging one another until some fool revolted, and, shouting to his comrades, bade them leave off. It was not until then that the flogging ceased, and the *stanovoy* escaped from the barn.

It is this very advice of the fool that men who believe in the necessity of civil government seem unable to follow. They are unable to stop punishing themselves, and setting an absurd example for others to imitate. Such is the consummation of merely human wisdom.

Is it possible, indeed, to imagine a more striking imitation of those men flogging one another than the meekness with which the men of these days fulfil those social duties that lead them into bondage, especially the military conscription? It is clear that men enslave themselves; they suffer from this slavery, and yet they believe it inevitable; they also believe that it will not affect the ultimate emancipation of mankind, which they declare the final outcome, in spite of the fact that slavery is ever increasing.

The man of modern times, whoever he may be (I do not mean a true Christian), educated or ignorant, a believer or an unbeliever, rich or poor, married or single, does his work, takes his pleasures, and dreads all restrictions and privations, all enmity and suffering. Thus he is living, peaceably. Suddenly men come to

him and say: "First, promise on your oath that you will obey us like a slave in all that we command; believe that whatever we tell you is unquestionably true, and submit to all that we shall call laws. Or, secondly, give us a share in the product of your labor, that we may use it to keep you in bondage, and prevent you from revolting against our commands. Or, thirdly, choose, or be chosen among, the so-called officials of the government, knowing that the government will go on quite regardless of the foolish speeches which you, or others like you, may utter; that it will be carried on in accordance with our wishes and the wishes of those who control the army. Or, fourthly, come to the law-courts, and take part in all the senseless cruelties which we commit against men, who are erring and depraved men, and who have become so through our fault,—in the form of imprisonment, exile, solitary confinement, and execution. Or, lastly, although you may be on the most friendly terms with men who belong to other nations, you must be ready at a moment's notice, whenever the command is issued, to look upon such of them as we shall indicate as your enemies, and either personally or by substitute contribute to the ruin, robbery, and murder of these men, of old men, women, and children—even, if we require it, of your fellow-countrymen and your parents."

One would think that in these days there could be but one reply from any man in his senses.

"Why must I do all this? Why must I promise to obey all the orders of Salisbury to-day, those of Gladstone to-morrow; Boulanger to-day, and to-morrow the orders of an assembly composed of men like Boulanger; Peter III. to-day, Catharine to-morrow, and the next day Pugatchov; to-day the insane King of Bavaria, to-morrow the Emperor William? Why should I promise this to men whom I know to be wicked or foolish, or men whom I know nothing at all about? Why should I, in the form of taxes, hand over to them the fruits of my labor, knowing that this money will be used to bribe officials, to support prisons, churches, and armies, to pay for the execution of evil acts destined for my

oppression? In other words, why should I apply the rod to my own back? Why should I go on wasting my time, averting my eyes, helping to give a semblance of legality to the acts of wrong-doers, play a part in elections, and pretend to participate in the government, when I know perfectly well that the country is ruled by those who control the army? Why should I go into the courts and be a party to the infliction of tortures and executions upon my erring fellow-beings, knowing, if I am a Christian, that the law of love has been substituted for the law of vengeance, and if I am an educated man, that punishment, so far from reforming its victims, serves only to demoralize them? Why should I, in person or in substitute, go and kill and despoil, and expose myself to the dangers of war, simply because the key of the temple of Jerusalem happens to be in the keeping of one bishop rather than in that of another; because Bulgaria is to be ruled by one German prince instead of another; or because the privileges of the seal fishery are reserved for the English to the exclusion of the American merchants. Why should I regard as my enemies the inhabitants of a neighboring country, with whom up to the present day I have lived, and still wish to live, in peace and amity, — why should I go myself, or pay for soldiers, to murder and ruin them?

“And, above all, why should I contribute, whether in person or by paying for military service, to the enslavement and destruction of my brothers and parents? Why should I scourge myself? All this is of no use to me; on the contrary, it does me harm. It is altogether degrading, immoral, mean, and contemptible. Why, then, should I do all this? If I am told that I shall be made to suffer in any event, I reply that in the first place, there can be no possible suffering greater than that which would befall me were I to execute your commands. And in the second place, it is perfectly evident to me that if we refuse to scourge ourselves, no one else will do it for us. Governments are but sovereigns, statesmen, officials, who can no more force me against my will, than the *stanovoy* could force the

peasants; I should be brought before the court, or thrown into prison, or executed, not by the sovereign, or the high officials, but by men in the same position as myself; and as it would be equally injurious and disagreeable for them to be scourged as for me, I should probably open their eyes, and they would not only refrain from injuring me, but would doubtless follow my example. And in the third place, though I were made to suffer for this, it would still be better for me to be exiled or imprisoned, doing battle in the cause of common sense and truth, which must eventually triumph, if not to-day, then to-morrow, or before many days, than to suffer in the cause of folly and evil. It would rather be to my advantage to risk being exiled, imprisoned, or even executed, than remain, through my own fault, a life-long slave of evil men, to be ruined by an invading enemy, or mutilated like an idiot, or killed while defending a cannon, a useless territory, or a senseless piece of cloth called a flag. I have no inclination to scourge myself, it would be of no use. You may do it yourselves if you choose — I refuse."

It would seem as though not only the religious and moral element in human nature, but ordinary common sense and wise counsel, would influence every man of the present day thus to make reply, and to suit the action to the word. But no. Men who hold the social life-conception consider such a course not only useless, but even prejudicial to the object in view, — the deliverance of mankind from slavery. They advise us to go on, like the peasants, punishing one another, comforting ourselves with the reflection that our chatter in parliaments and assemblies, our trade unions, our First of May demonstrations, our conspiracies and covert threats to the governments that scourge us, must result in our final deliverance, even though we go on strengthening our fetters. Nothing so hampers human liberty as this wonderful delusion. Instead of making individual efforts to achieve freedom, every man for himself devoting all his energies to that object, through the attainment of a new life-conception, men are looking for a

universal scheme of deliverance, and are in the meanwhile sinking deeper and deeper into slavery. It is as if a man were to declare that in order to obtain heat one must merely place every lump of coal in a certain position, never minding whether it kindled or not. And yet that the liberation of mankind can only be accomplished by means of the deliverance of the individual grows more and more evident.

The liberation of individuals from the dominion of the State, in the name of the Christian life-conception, which was formerly an exceptional occurrence and one that attracted but little attention, has attained in these days a menacing significance for the authority of State.

If in the days of ancient Rome it happened that a Christian, professing his faith, refused to take a part in sacrifices, or in the worship of the emperors or the gods, or in the Middle Ages refused to worship ikons or to acknowledge the temporal authority of the Pope, such refusals were the exception ; a man might be obliged to confess to his faith, but he might perhaps live all his life without being forced to do so. But now all men, without exception, are subjected to trial of faith. Every man of modern times is obliged, either to participate in the cruelties of pagan life, or to repudiate them. And secondly, in those days any refusal to bow before the gods, the ikons, or the Pope was of no consequence to the State. Whether those who bowed before the gods, the ikons, or the Pope were many or few, the State lost none of its power. Whereas at the present time every refusal to execute the un-Christian demands of the government undermines the authority of the State, because the authority of the State rests on the fulfilment of these anti-Christian requirements.

Temporal authority, in order to maintain itself, has been forced by the conditions of life to demand from its subjects certain actions which it is impossible for men who profess true Christianity to perform. Therefore at the present time every man who professes it helps to undermine the authority of the government, and will eventually pave the way for the liberation of mankind.

Of what apparent importance are such acts as the refusal of a score or two of fools, as they are called, — men who decline to take the oath of allegiance, to pay taxes, or to take part in courts of law, or to serve in the army? Such men are tried and condemned, and life remains unchanged. These occurrences may seem unimportant, and yet these are precisely the factors that undermine the authority of the government more than any others, and thus prepare the way for the liberation of mankind. These are the bees who are the first to separate themselves from the swarm, and, still hovering near, they wait for the whole swarm to rise and follow them. The governments are aware of this, and look upon such occurrences with more apprehension than upon all the socialists, anarchists, and communists, with their conspiracies and their dynamite bombs.

A new *régime* is inaugurated. Each subject, according to custom, is required to take the oath of allegiance to the new government. A proclamation is issued, and all are bidden to assemble in the cathedral to take the oath. Suddenly one man in Perm, another in Tula, a third in Moscow, a fourth in Kaluga, refuse to take the oath and (without preconcerted action) justify their refusal by the same argument, — that the Christian law forbids the oath; but, even were the oath not forbidden, they could not, according to the spirit of this law, promise to perform such evil deeds as the oath requires, — such as reporting those antagonistic to the interests of the government, defending that government by armed force, or attacking its enemies. They are summoned to appear before the *stanovoy*s, *sprawniks*, priests, governors; they are reasoned with, coaxed, threatened, and punished; yet they adhere to their determination, and refuse to take the oath. They are asked, "Is it true that you never took the oath?"

"It is."

"And what was done to you?"

"Nothing."

Every subject is required to pay his taxes, and the taxes are paid. But one man in Charkov, another in

Iver, and a third in Samara, refuse to comply, and, as by one accord, each man alleges the same reason. One of them says that he will pay after he has learned the object for which his money is to be used. "If it is to be used for charity, he will give of his own free will, and even more than is demanded of him. But if it is to be applied to evil purposes, he will give nothing of his own free will, because, according to the law of Christ, which he obeys, he can take no part in doing evil." And the others who refuse to pay taxes, except on compulsion, express the same idea, perhaps in other words. Those who have property are forced to pay, and those who have none are simply let alone.

"Then you have not paid your tax?"

"No."

"And what was done to you?"

"Nothing."

The passport system is instituted. Every man who leaves his home must apply for one, and pay a tax for it. Suddenly, in different places, are to be found those who declare that passports should not be used, that a man should not acknowledge his dependence upon the State, which is supported by violence; and these men take no passports, consequently they pay no tax for them. And again, there are no means of coercing them to comply with the demand. They are imprisoned, but when after a time they find themselves at liberty again, they go on living without passports.

Every peasant is expected to perform police duty as *sotsky* or *dessiatsky*,¹ etc.; but some peasant in Charkov refuses to fulfil this duty, because, as he says in explanation of his refusal, the law of Christ, which he professes, forbids him to arrest, imprison, or transport his fellow-men. Another peasant in Iver or in Tambov makes the same statement. The peasants are threatened, beaten, and imprisoned, but they adhere to their resolution, and refuse to perform actions contrary to their religious belief. And they cease to be elected *sotsky*, and are gradually left in peace.

It is the duty of every citizen to serve on the jury.

¹ Petty rural police. — TR.

All at once men of widely different classes, — carriage-makers, professors, merchants, peasants, nobles, — as if moved by a single impulse, refuse to fulfil this duty, not for reasons valid in the eyes of the law, but because the tribunal itself is, in their opinion, illegal and un-Christian, and ought not to exist. These men are fined, and false reasons are ascribed for their refusal, the true ones meanwhile remaining hidden from the public. The same treatment is employed in regard to those who, for similar reasons, refuse to appear as witnesses in courts of law. These, too, are finally left undisturbed.

Every man at the age of twenty-one must draw lots. Suddenly there is found a man in Moscow, another in Iver, another in Charkov, and still another in Kiev, who, as it were by agreement, go to the department and declare that they will neither take the oath of allegiance nor serve in the army, because they are Christians. Here are the details of an affair which was among the earlier cases, — of late these refusals have begun to multiply, — a case with which I am myself familiar,¹ which is but one example among many.

In the City Hall of Moscow a young man of average education gives his reasons for refusing to comply. His words are not heeded, and he is bidden to repeat the words of the oath with the other men. He still persists in his refusal, and quotes a certain passage in the Bible that forbids men to take an oath. No attention is paid to his arguments, and again he is ordered to take the oath, which he declines to do. Whereupon it is taken for granted that he is a sectarian, and therefore misunderstands Christianity; in other words, that he differs from the priests paid by the State. He is then sent under guard to the priests that they may convince him, which they endeavor to do; but the arguments uttered in the name of Christ, by which they strive to persuade him to deny Christ, evidently have no effect on the young man. So they declare him incorrigible, and send him back to the army. Still he openly refuses to take the oath and to fulfil his military duties.

¹ The details of this case are authentic.

It is a case not anticipated by the law. A refusal to comply with the demands of the government cannot be overlooked, neither can this case be called one of ordinary insubordination. After conferring, the military authorities decide that, in order to rid themselves of this objectionable youth, the better way will be to consider him as a rebel and forward him under military escort to the Department of the Secret Police. The police officials and the gendarmes question the young man, but his replies will not serve to classify his offense under the heading of any crime that comes within their jurisdiction; they cannot either accuse him of revolutionary motives, or of conspiracy, because he declares that he has no desire to destroy anything whatsoever; on the contrary, he opposes all violence. He says that he has nothing to conceal; he desires only an opportunity for saying and doing all things in the most open manner. And as it resulted with the clergy, so also with the gendarmes, who, though rarely embarrassed as to how to put the law in operation, can find no pretext for an accusation against the young man, and send him back to the ranks. Once more there is a conference, and his superiors decide that, although he has not taken the oath of allegiance, he is to be regarded as a soldier. He is put into uniform, his name is entered on the lists, and he is sent under convoy to his post. Here his immediate superiors once more order him to perform his military duty, and still he refuses to obey, and in the presence of the other soldiers he states his reasons, saying that, as a Christian, he cannot of his own free will prepare himself to commit murder, which was forbidden even by the law of Moses.

All this takes place in a provincial city. The occurrence excites the interest and the sympathy, not only of outsiders, but even of the officers, and therefore there is hesitation about employing the usual punishment for contumacy. However, for the sake of appearances, he is thrown into jail, and a request is sent to the higher military authorities for further instructions in the case. From an official standpoint this refusal to take part in a military organization, in which the Czar

himself serves, and which is blessed by the Church, must be regarded as insanity, and therefore the message is received from St. Petersburg that the young man is probably insane, and that before any violent measures are used against him he must be sent to the insane hospital. Thither he is sent in the hope that he will remain there, as happened some ten years ago in the case of a young man from Iver, who also refused to serve, and who was tortured in the hospital until at last he was subdued. But in the present instance even this measure fails to relieve the military authorities from this troublesome young man. The doctors examine him, become interested in him, and, discovering no symptoms of insanity, they return him to his post. He is received, and pretending that his refusal and its causes are forgotten, he is once more invited to join the drill, and again he refuses, in the presence of other soldiers, stating his reasons for his refusal. The affair attracts more and more notice from soldiers as well as from civilians. Again the question is referred to St. Petersburg, and thence comes the order to transfer the young man to the frontier, where the troops are in active service, and where, if he refuses to obey orders, he may be shot without exciting attention, as there are but few Russians and Christians in that far-away territory, the majority being foreigners and Mohammedans. This is done. The young man is ordered to join the Trans-Caspian troops, and with other criminals he is delivered into the hands of commanders noted for their severity and determination.

Meanwhile, during all these transportations from place to place, the young man has suffered from harsh treatment, from cold, hunger, and filth, and his life has been made miserable. Yet all these trials do not weaken his resolution. In the Trans-Caspian province, where he is once more ordered to serve as a sentry under arms, he refuses to obey. He consents to stand where he is sent, beside the hayricks, but declines to take a weapon in his hand, declaring that on no account will he use violence against any one whomso-

ever. All this occurs in the presence of the soldiers. Such contumacy cannot go unpunished; consequently he is court-martialed for an infringement of military discipline, convicted, and sentenced to two years' confinement in a military prison. And once again, with the criminals, he is sent by *étape* to the Caucasus and then thrown into prison, his fate being left to the discretionary power of the jailer. There he is tortured for a year and a half, but still his resolution to avoid the use of weapons remains unchanged, and he continues to explain to every one whom he meets the reasons for his refusal. Toward the end of the second year, before his term has really expired, he is set at liberty; and although not in accordance with the law, they are so anxious to rid themselves of him, that his imprisonment is accepted as an equivalent of further active service.

And in various parts of Russia others are found who, as if by a concerted plan, imitate his example, and in every case the action of the government is undecided, vacillating, and underhanded. Some of these men are confined in the insane hospitals, some are appointed military clerks and sent to serve in Siberia, some are made foresters, others are thrown into prison, others are fined. At the present time several of these men are imprisoned, not for their substantial offense, denying the legality of the acts of the government, but for disobeying the particular orders of their superiors. For instance, an officer of the reserve recently failed to give information of the place of his residence, and declined to serve further in the army; he was fined thirty roubles for disobeying the orders of the authorities, — and this he declined to pay, except under compulsion. Several peasants and soldiers who refused to take part in a drill and to use weapons were put under arrest for disobedience and contention.

Such instances of a refusal to comply with the demands of the State when opposed to Christianity, especially refusals to perform military service, occur not only in Russia, but everywhere. I know that in Servia,

men from the so-called sect of Nazarenes steadily refuse to enter the army, and the Austrian government has for several years made futile attempts to convert them by means of imprisonment. In 1885 there were 130 refusals of this kind. I know that in Switzerland, in 1890, there were men in confinement in the castle of Chillon for refusing to perform military duty whose determination was not to be influenced by punishment. Such refusals have occurred in Sweden; the men there also were imprisoned, and the government carefully concealed the affairs from the people. Similar instances occurred in Prussia. I know of one subaltern officer in the guards who, in 1891, in Berlin, announced to his superiors that he, as a Christian, could not continue his military service, and in spite of all remonstrances and threats he adhered to his resolution. In the south of France a community of men called the Hinschist has recently been established (my information is derived from the *Peace Herald* of July, 1891), who, as professing the Christian doctrine, refuse to perform military duty. At first they were told off to serve in hospitals, but now, with the increase of the sect, they are punished for insubordination, while they still refuse to bear arms.

Socialists, communists, and anarchists, with their bombs and their revolutions, are far less dangerous to governments than these men, who from different places proclaim their refusals, all based upon the same doctrine, familiar to all. Every government knows how to defend itself from revolutionists; it holds the means in its own hands, and therefore does not fear these external foes. But what can a government do to protect itself from men who declaim against all authority as useless, superfluous, and injurious, offering, however, no opposition to authority, merely rejecting its offices, dispensing with its services, and therefore refusing to participate in it?

The revolutionists say: "State organization is bad, either for one reason or for another; it should be destroyed, and replaced by such and such a system." But a Christian says: "I know nothing of State organiza-

tion, whether it be good or bad, and it is for this very reason that I do not wish to support it. And I cannot undertake submission, because such submission is contrary to my conscience."

All the institutions of the State are opposed to the conscience of a Christian: the oath of allegiance, taxation, courts of law, armies; while the whole authority of government is dependent upon them. Revolutionary foes struggle against the government, but Christianity enters not into this contest; internally, it destroys the principles on which government is based.

With the Russian people, in whose midst, particularly since the time of Peter I., the protest of Christianity against the State has never ceased; in the midst of this people, where the conditions of life are such that whole communes emigrate to Turkey, China, and uninhabited portions of the globe, who, so far from needing the government, always consider it an unnecessary burden, and only endure it as a calamity, whether it be Russian, Chinese, or Turkish,—the cases of isolated individuals who, from Christian motives, have liberated themselves from the control of government have grown more and more frequent in these latter days. Such manifestations are particularly dreaded by the government at the present time, because the men who protest often belong not to the so-called lower, the uneducated classes, but are men of average and even superior education, and because these men explain their refusals, not by some mystical belief peculiar to the individual, as in olden times, nor do they complicate them with superstition and fanaticism, like the sects of the Self-burners or Bieguni, but assign as the reason for their refusals the simplest, most obvious of truths, patent to and admitted by all the world.

Thus men refuse to pay taxes of their own free will, because the money is used to promote violence; in other words, to pay the wages of the violators in the army, for building prisons and fortresses, or for manufacturing cannon,—in all of which, as Christians, they consider it wrong and immoral to take a part.

They refuse to take the oath of allegiance, for were they to promise to obey the authorities, — that is, men who use violence, — they must contradict the sense of the Christian doctrine.

They refuse to swear in court, because an oath is distinctly forbidden by the gospel.

They decline police duties, because in that office they would be compelled to use violence against their brethren and to distress them, and a Christian cannot do this.

They refuse to take part in courts of law, because they look upon every tribunal as a vehicle for the law of vengeance, and therefore incompatible with the Christian law of forgiveness and love.

They decline to have anything to do with military preparations, or to enter the ranks of the army, because they neither can nor will be executioners, nor prepare themselves for such an office.

And the reasons alleged for these refusals are of such a nature that, however arbitrary the governments may be, they cannot punish openly those who refuse.

Were the governments to punish men for such refusals, they would be forced to abjure forever both justice and virtue, those principles by which, as they assure us, all their authority is supported.

What are governments to do with these men? Of course they have the power to execute, to imprison, and to condemn to transportation and penal servitude all enemies who attempt to overthrow them by violence; they can obtain by bribery half the men they need, and have at their command millions of armed soldiers, who are ready to put to death all the enemies of authority. But what can be done with men who wish neither to destroy nor to establish anything, whose sole desire is to avoid in their own private lives any act that may be opposed to the Christian law, and who consequently refuse to perform duties which are regarded by the government as the most natural and obligatory of all?

If they were revolutionists, preaching violence and

practising it, it would be an easy matter to oppose them. Some might be bribed, some deceived, others intimidated, and those who could neither be bought, deceived, nor intimidated would be manifestly criminals, enemies of society who, as such, could be executed or beaten to death; and the people would approve the acts of the government. If they were fanatics belonging to some particular sect, one might, in view of the superstitions inherent in their doctrine, refute at the same time what truth their arguments contained. But what is to be done with men who neither preach rebellion nor any special dogmas, who wish to live in peace with all mankind, who refuse to take the oath of allegiance or to pay taxes, or to take part in tribunals, to perform military service, and the various duties of a similar nature, on which the whole organization of the State is founded? What is to be done with them? They cannot be bribed. The very risk they are willing to take shows their integrity. Neither can they be deceived when these things are represented as the commands of God, because their refusal is based on the indubitable law of God, by which the very men who are trying to coerce them to disobey this law profess to hold themselves bound. It is vain to hope to intimidate them by threats, because the very suffering and privations which they endure for righteousness' sake serve but to strengthen their devotion to their faith, whose law distinctly commands them first of all to obey God, to fear not them that kill the body, but to fear those who can kill both body and soul. Neither can they be executed or imprisoned for life. Their past lives, their thoughts and actions, their friends, speak for them; every one knows them to be gentle, kindly, and harmless men, and it is impossible to represent them in the light of criminals whose suppression is needed for the salvation of society. Moreover, the execution of men acknowledged by all to be virtuous would arouse defenders who would endeavor to explain the causes for their disobedience. And when all men are made to recognize the reasons why these Christians refuse to obey the demands of the State, they cannot fail to ac-

knowledge the same obligation, and to admit that all men should long since have refused obedience.

Confronted with these insubordinations, governments find themselves in a desperate plight. They realize that the prophecies of Christianity are about to be fulfilled, that it is loosening the fetters of them that are in bonds and setting men free; they realize that such freedom will inevitably destroy those who have held mankind in bondage. Governments realize this; they know that their hours are counted, that they are helpless to resist. All that they are able to do is to retard the hour of dissolution. And this they try to do; but their position is still a desperate one.

It is like the predicament of a conqueror who wishes to preserve the town set on fire by the inhabitants. No sooner does he put the fire out in one place than two other fires break out; when he separates the burning portion from the main body of a large building the flames burst out at both extremities. These outbreaks are not, as yet, of frequent occurrence, but the spark has been kindled, and the fire will burn steadily until all is consumed.

The position of governments in the presence of men who profess Christianity is so precarious that very little is needed to shake to pieces their power, built up through so many centuries, and apparently so solid in structure. And it is now that the sociologist comes forward, preaching that it is useless, and even hurtful and immoral, for the individual to emancipate himself alone.

Let us suppose that men have been working for a long time to divert the course of a river; they have at last succeeded in digging a canal, and all that remains now is to make an opening and let the water flow through it into the canal; suppose now certain other men arrive upon the scene and suggest that, instead of letting the water flow into the canal, it would be much better to erect over the river some form of machinery, by means of which the water would be poured from one side to the other.

But things have gone too far. Governments are

aware of their weakness and helplessness, and men of the Christian faith are awakening from their torpor, beginning already to realize their power.

"I am come to send fire on the earth," said Christ. And this is the fire that begins to burn.

CHAPTER X

USELESSNESS OF VIOLENCE FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF EVIL. THE MORAL ADVANCE OF MANKIND IS ACCOMPLISHED, NOT ONLY THROUGH THE KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH, BUT ALSO THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC OPINION

Christianity destroys the State — Which is more necessary, Christianity or the State? — There are men who defend the necessity of the State, and others who, on the same grounds, deny this necessity — Neither can be proved by abstract reasoning — The question decides the character of a man's consciousness, which either allows or forbids him to participate in the organization of the State — Realization of the uselessness and immorality of taking part in the organization of the State, which is contradictory to Christian doctrine, decides this question for each one, regardless of the destiny of the State — Argument of the defenders of the State, as a form of social life indispensable for the defense of the good from the wicked, until all nations, and all members of each nation, shall have become Christians — The more wicked are always those in power — History is but a recital of the usurpation of power by the bad over the good — The acknowledgment by authority of the necessity of struggle with evil by violence is equivalent to self-destruction — The annihilation of violence is not only possible, but is going on before our eyes — However, it is not destroyed by State violence, but through those men who, obtaining power by violence, and recognizing its vanity and futility, benefit by experience and become incapable of using violence — This is the process through which individual men, as well as whole nations, have passed — It is in that way that Christianity penetrates into the consciousness of men, and not only is this accomplished despite the violence used by authority, but through its agency, and therefore the abolition of authority is not only without danger, but it goes on continually as life itself — Objection of the defenders of the State system that the diffusion of Christianity is improbable — Diffusion of Christian truth interdicting violence accomplished not only slowly and gradually, by the internal method, by individual recognition of the truth, by prophetic intuition, by the realizing of the emptiness of power and abandonment of it by individual men, but accomplished also by the external method, by which large numbers of men, inferior in intellectual development, at once, in view of their confidence in the others, adopt the new truth — The diffusion of truth at a certain stage creates a public opinion, which

compels the majority of men who have previously opposed it to recognize the new truth at once — Therefore a universal renunciation of violence may very soon come to pass; namely, when a Christian public opinion shall be established — The conviction of the necessity of violence prevents the establishment of Christian public opinion — Violence compels men to discredit the moral force which can alone exalt them — Neither nations nor individual men have been conquered by violence, but by public opinion, which no violence can resist — It is possible to conquer savage men and nations only by the diffusion of Christian public opinion among them, whereas the Christian nations, in order to conquer them, do everything in their power to destroy the establishment of a Christian public opinion — These unsuccessful experiments cannot be cited as a proof of the impossibility of conquering men by Christianity — Violence which corrupts public opinion only prevents the social organization from becoming what it should be, and with the abolition of violence Christian public opinion will be established — Whatever may take place when violence has been abolished, the unknown future can be no worse than the present, and therefore one need not fear it — To penetrate to the unknown and move toward it is the essence of life.

CHRISTIANITY, faithfully interpreted, saps the foundations of the civil law, and this was always understood from the very outset. It was for this that Christ was crucified; and until men felt the necessity for justifying the establishment of the Christian state, they always accepted that interpretation. The cleverly constructed theories intended to reconcile the doctrines of Christianity with that of the State date back to the time when rulers of nations adopted a nominal external Christianity. But in these times it is impossible for a sincere and earnest man not to perceive the incompatibility of the Christian doctrine of love, meekness of spirit, and forgiveness of injuries, with the despotism, the violence, and the wars of the State. The profession of true Christianity not only forbids the recognition of the State, but strikes at its very foundations.

But if it be true that Christianity is incompatible with the State, one naturally asks which is the better adapted to promote the well-being of mankind, the system prescribed by the State, or the precepts of Christianity?

There are those who affirm that the State organization is the more indispensable; they declare that its overthrow would check all human progress, that no development is possible save through the channels of

civil government, and that all those evils which we find prevailing among nations who live under State laws are not the result of the organization, which permits progress and the attainment of the highest degree of civilization.

They who hold these views quote, in support of their position, certain historical, philosophical, and even religious arguments, which seem to them irrefutable. But there are others who entertain views diametrically opposed to these. For instance, they say that the fact of the world having existed at one time without a government, might be taken to prove the State to be only a temporary condition ; that the time was sure to come when men would require a change, which time had now arrived. To support their theory, these men in turn adduce historical, philosophical, and religious arguments which seem to them irrefutable.

Volumes may be and have been written in defense of the former position, and of late years a great deal has been written, and ably written too, from the opposite standpoint.

It can neither be proved on the one hand, as the partizans of the State claim, that its destruction would be followed by a general upheaval, by robberies and murders, and by the nullification of all social laws, and the return of man to a condition of barbarism ; nor on the other, as the enemies of the State affirm, that man has grown so virtuous and well disposed that, preferring peace to enmity, he will no longer rob and murder his neighbor ; that he is quite able, without State assistance, to establish a community, and conduct his own affairs ; and that the State itself, while assuming an air of protection, is really exerting a demoralizing influence. It is impossible to prove either one or the other by abstract arguments. And naturally neither point can be proved by experience, as it is a question first of all of getting the requisite experience.

Whether or not the time has arrived for abolishing the State is a question which could not be answered were it not that we possess other means that will assist us to settle it beyond dispute.

It needs no one to tell the young birds when it is time to burst the shell; they know very well when there is no longer room for them in the eggs, and begin of their own accord to break the shell and leave it behind. So it is with this question of a change in human affairs. Has the time come for men to cast aside the customs of the State and establish a new order? When a man's inner consciousness has so developed that he feels himself hampered by the requirements of the State, and can no longer submit to the restraint, realizing at the same time that he has ceased to need its protecting care, the question whether or no men have matured sufficiently to enable them to dispense with the State is disposed of without reference to former arguments. A man who has outgrown the State can no more be coerced into submission to its laws than can the fledgling be made to reënter its shell.

"The State may have been necessary at one time, and for aught that I know it may even now serve the purposes you mention," says the man who holds the Christian life-conception. "I can only say that *I* have no need of it, nor can *I* conform to its requirements. You must decide for yourself whether it be advantageous or no. I shall not attempt to generalize on the subject with the expectation of proving my point. I only recognize what I need and what I don't need; what I can, and what I cannot do. I know, as far as I am myself concerned, that *I* do not need to separate from the men of other nations, and therefore I can neither recognize an exclusive affiliation to this or that one, nor acknowledge myself the subject of any one government. I need none of the institutions established by the State, and therefore I am not willing to surrender the fruits of my labor in the form of taxes to support institutions which I believe to be not only unnecessary but positively injurious. I know that *I* need neither magistrates, nor tribunals founded on and supported by violence, and therefore I can have nothing to do with them; I know that *I* feel no inclination to attack other nations and put their citizens to death.

neither do I wish to defend myself against them by force of arms, and therefore I can take no part in wars nor in preparations for wars. Doubtless there are men who believe that all these things are an indispensable part of human life, — I cannot argue with them, — but I know that for me they have no meaning, and that I will have nothing to do with them.

“And this is not a matter of personal selection, but because I must obey the commands of Him who has sent me into the world, and has given me an unmistakable law by which I am to be guided through life.”

Whatever arguments may be advanced to prove that harm and probably disaster will accrue from abolishing the authority of the State, the man who has already outgrown the State ideal cannot possibly be bound by it. And whatever arguments may be adduced to prove its necessity, he can never return to it. He is like the young bird who can never return to its outgrown shell.

“But granting this to be true,” say the partizans of the existing order, “we cannot dispense with the supremacy of the State until all men are Christians, because even among those who claim the title there are many who are very far from being Christians — evil-doers, who seek their own gratification at the expense of their fellow-men, and if the governments were overthrown, so far from improving the condition of the people, it would greatly add to their miseries. The subversion of the State would be a misfortune, not only where the minority are true Christians, but even supposing the whole people to be so; while the neighboring nations are still non-Christian, these latter would make their lives a martyrdom by rapine and murder and all manner of violence. It would serve only to provide the vicious and unprincipled with an opportunity to oppress the innocent. Therefore the State should not be abolished until all the wicked have ceased from troubling, which will not happen just at present. Hence, however much certain individual Christians may wish to escape from the authority of the State, the greater good of the

greater number demands its preservation." So say the defenders of the State principle. "If it were not," they say, "for State authority there would be no protection against the malice and injustice of the oppressor; that authority alone makes it possible to restrain the wicked."

But in uttering these sentiments the partizans of the existing order take it for granted that they have proved the truth of what they assert. When they declare that the evil-doers would ride roughshod over the defenseless and the innocent were it not for the authority of the State, they imply that the governing power is vested at the present time in a body of virtuous men, who control all the wrong-doers. But this is a proposition which must be proved. It could only be a correct statement if we happened to resemble the inhabitants of China, where it is popularly believed, although the belief is not justified by fact, that the good are always in authority, because should it become known that the rulers are no better than those over whom they rule, it is the duty of the citizens to overthrow the government. But although this is supposed to be one of the customs of China, it is not, nor would it be possible for it to be so, since, in order to overthrow a criminal government, one needs the power as well as the right. Even in China this is a mere supposition, and in our own Christian land we have never so much as dreamed of it. As far as we are concerned, there is no reason to believe that power is in the hands of the virtuous and high-minded, rather than in those of men who took it by violence and have held it for themselves and their descendants. For surely it would be impossible for a high-minded man to usurp authority by violence and to continue to hold it.

In order to gain possession of power, and to retain it, one must have a love for it, and the love of power is incompatible with goodness; it accords with the opposite qualities of pride, duplicity, and cruelty.

Both the origin and the maintenance of power depend upon the exaltation of the individual, and the degradation of the people by means of hypocrisy and fraud, by

prisons, fortresses, and murders. "If State authority were to be abolished, then would the more wicked people dominate over the less wicked," say the upholders of State organization. But if the Egyptians conquered the Hebrews, and the Persians the Egyptians, and the Macedonians the Persians, and the Romans the Greeks, and the barbarians the Romans, is it really possible that the conquerors are always better than the conquered? And so with political changes in the State; is the power always transferred to the better men? When Louis XVI. was deposed, and control passed into the hands of Robespierre, and when, later, he was in turn succeeded by Napoleon, was it the better or the worse man who held the power? Again, were they of Versailles or the communists the better men? Charles the First or Cromwell? When Peter III. reigned, or, after his murder, when Catharine ruled over one part of Russia, and Pugatchov over the other — who then was good and who was wicked?

All those in authority affirm that their office is required in order that the unprincipled may be hindered from oppressing the innocent, implying thereby that they themselves, being virtuous, are protecting other virtuous men from the malice of the evil-doer. To possess power and to do violence are synonymous terms; to do violence means doing something to which the victim of violence objects, and which the aggressor would resent were it directed against himself. Therefore the possession of power really means doing unto others what we should not like if it were done to ourselves, — that is, harm.

Obedience signifies that a man holds patience to be better than violence, and to choose patience rather than violence means to be good, or, at least, not so wicked as those who do unto others what they would not wish to have done to themselves.

Therefore all the probabilities are that those in authority were in past times, as they are in present, worse men than those they ruled over. Doubtless there are wicked men among those who submit to authority,

but it is impossible that the better men should rule over the worse.

This might be thought in pagan times, when the definition of goodness was inaccurate; but with the clear and exact conception of the qualities of good and evil presented by Christianity before us we cannot imagine it. If in the pagan world they who were more or less good, and they who were more or less bad, might not be easily distinguished, the characteristics of goodness and wickedness have been so clearly defined by the Christian conception that it is impossible to mistake them. According to the doctrine of Christ, the good are those who submit and are long-suffering, who do not resist evil by violence, who forgive injuries, and love their enemies; the wicked are the vainglorious, who tyrannize, who are arrogant and violent with others. Therefore, if we are guided by the doctrine of Christ, we shall have no difficulty in deciding where to seek the good and the wicked among rulers and subjects. It is even absurd to speak of Christians as sovereigns or rulers.

The non-Christians—that is, those to whom life is but a matter of temporal welfare—must always rule over the Christians, for whom life means self-denial and disregard of temporal things.

And thus it has always been, and it has been manifested more and more plainly as the Christian doctrine has become more clearly defined and widespread.

The farther true Christianity extended, the firmer the hold it gained on the consciousness of men, the less possible it became for Christians to belong to the dominant class, and the easier for non-Christians to gain the ascendancy.

“To abolish the supremacy of the State before all men have become true Christians would only afford the wicked a chance to tyrannize over the good and maltreat them with impunity,” say the upholders of the existing order.

It has always been the same from the beginning of the world until this present time, and it always will be. *The*

wicked always rule over the good and do violence to them. Cain did violence to Abel, the astute Jacob betrayed the trusting Esau, and was himself deceived by Laban; Caiaphas and Pilate sat in judgment on Christ; the Roman emperors ruled over Seneca, Epictetus, and other high-minded Romans of those times; Ivan IV. with his Opritchniks, the tipsy syphilitic Peter with his clowns, the prostitute Catharine with her lovers, ruled over the industrious, God-fearing Russian people of those times, and trampled upon them. William rules the Germans, Stambulov the Bulgarians, and the Russian officials rule over the Russian people; the Germans ruled over the Italians, and now they rule over the Hungarians and the Slavs. The Turks ruled over the Greeks and now rule over the Slavs, the English over the Hindoos, the Mongolians over the Chinese.

So we see that whether the tyranny of the State is or is not to be abolished, the position of the innocent, who are oppressed by the tyrants, will not be materially affected thereby.

Men are not to be frightened by being told that the wicked will oppress the good, because that is the natural course, and will never change.

The whole of pagan history is a mere narrative of events wherein the wicked have got the upper hand, and, once in power, by craft and cruelty have kept their hold upon men, announcing themselves meanwhile as the guardians of justice and the defenders of the innocent against the oppressor. All revolutions are but the result of the appropriation of power by the wicked and their rule over the good. When the rulers say that if their power were to be destroyed the evil-doers would tyrannize over the innocent, what they really mean is that the tyrants in power are reluctant to yield to those other tyrants who would fain wrest from them their authority. When they protest that this authority of theirs, which is actually violence, is necessary to defend the people against the possible tyranny of others,¹ they are simply

¹ Such declarations on the part of Russian authorities, who are noted for their oppression of foreign nationalities, — the Poles, the Germans of the

denouncing themselves. The reason why violence is dangerous is that, whenever it is employed, all the arguments which the perpetrators advanced in their own defense may be used against them with even greater force. They talk of the violence done in the past, and more frequently of future and imaginary violence, while they themselves are the real offenders. "You say that men committed robbery and murder in former times, and profess anxiety lest all men be robbed or murdered unless protected by your authority. This may or may not be true, but the fact that you allow thousands of men to perish in prisons by enforced labor, in fortresses, and in exile, that your military requisitions ruin millions of families and imperil, morally and physically, millions of men, this is not a supposititious but an actual violence, which, according to your own reasoning, should be resisted by violence. And therefore, by your own admission, the wicked ones, against whom one should use violence, are yourselves." Thus should the oppressed reply to their oppressors. And such are the language, the thoughts, and the actions of non-Christians. Whenever the oppressed are more wicked than the oppressor, they attack and overthrow them whenever they are able; or else—and this is more frequently the case—they enter the ranks of the oppressors and take part in their tyranny.

Thus the dangers of which the defenders of State rights make a bugbear—that if authority were overthrown the wicked would prevail over the good—potentially exist at all times. The destruction of State violence, in fact, never can, for this very reason, lead to any real increase of violence on the part of the wicked over the good.

If State violence disappeared, it is not unlikely that

Baltic provinces, and the Jews,—strike one as both amusing and artless. The Russian government, which has oppressed its own subjects for centuries, and which has never protected the Malo-Russians in Poland, the Latishi in the Baltic provinces, nor the Russian peasants, of whom all sorts of people have taken advantage for hundreds of years, suddenly becomes a champion of the oppressed, of the very same people whom it still continues to oppress.

other acts of violence would be committed ; but the sum of violence can never be increased simply because the power passes from the hands of one into those of another.

“ State violence can never be abolished until all the wicked disappear,” say the advocates of the existing order, by which they imply that there must always be violence, because there will always be wicked people. This could only prove true, supposing the oppressors to be really beneficent, and supposing the true deliverance of mankind from evil must be accomplished by violence. Then, of course, violence could never cease. But as, on the contrary, violence never really overcomes evil, and since there is another way altogether to overcome it, the assertion that violence will never cease is untrue. Violence is diminishing, and clearly tending to disappear ; though not, as is claimed by the defenders of the existing order, in consequence of the amelioration of those who live under an oppressive government (their condition really gets worse), but because the consciousness of mankind is becoming more clear. Hence even the wicked men who are in power are growing less and less wicked, and will at last become so good that they will be incapable of committing deeds of violence.

The reason why humanity marches forward is not because the inferior men, having gained possession of power, reform their subjects by arbitrary methods, as is claimed both by Conservatives and Revolutionists, but is due above all to the fact that mankind in general is steadily, and with an ever increasing appreciation, adopting the Christian life-conception. There is a phenomenon observable in human life in a manner analogous to that of boiling. Those who profess the social life-conception are always ambitious to rule, and struggle to attain power. In this struggle the most gross and cruel, the least Christian elements of society, bubble up, as it were, and rise, by reason of their violence, into the ruling or upper classes of society. But then is fulfilled what Christ prophesied : “ Woe unto you that are rich ! Woe unto you that are full ! Woe

unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" (Luke vi. 24-26). The men who have attained power, and glory, and riches, and who have realized all their cherished aims, live to discover that all is vanity, and gladly return to their former estate. Charles V., Ivan the Terrible, Alexander I., having realized the evils of power and its futility, renounced it because they recognized it as a calamity, having lost all pleasure in the deeds of violence which they formerly enjoyed.

But it is not alone kings like Charles V. and Alexander I. who arrive at this disgust of power, but every man who has attained the object of his ambition. Not only the statesman, the general, the millionaire, the merchant, but every official who has gained the position for which he has longed this half score of years, every well-to-do peasant who has saved one or two hundred roubles, finds at last the same disillusion.

Not only individuals, but entire nations, mankind as a whole, have passed through this experience.

The attractions of power and all it brings — riches, honors, luxury — seem to men really worth struggling for only until they are won; for no sooner does a man hold them within his grasp than they manifest their own emptiness and gradually lose their charm, like clouds, lovely and picturesque in outline seen from afar, but no sooner is one enveloped in them than all their beauty vanishes.

Men who have obtained riches and power, those who have struggled for them, but more particularly those who have inherited them, cease to be greedy for power or cruel in its acquisition.

Having learned by experience, sometimes in one generation, sometimes in several, how utterly worthless are the fruits of violence, men abandon those vices acquired by the passion for riches and power, and growing more humane, they lose their positions, being crowded out by others who are less Christian and more wicked; whereupon they fall back into a stratum, which, though lower in the social scale, is higher in that of morality, thus increasing the mean level of Christian consciousness. But straightway, the worse, the rougher, and less Chris-

tian elements rise to the surface, and being subject to the same experience as their predecessors, after one or two generations these men, too, recognize the hollowness of violent ambitions, and, being penetrated with the spirit of Christianity, fall back into the ranks of the oppressed. These are in turn replaced by new oppressors, less despotic than the former, but rougher than those whom they oppress. So that although the authority is to all outward seeming unchanged, yet the number of those who have been driven by the exigencies of life to adopt the Christian life-conception increases with every change of rulers. They may be more harsh, more cruel, and less Christian than their subjects; but always men less and less violent replace their predecessors in authority.

Violence chooses its instruments from among the worst elements of society; men who gradually become leavened, and, softened and changed for the better, are returned into society.

Such is the process by means of which Christianity takes fuller possession of men day by day. Christianity enters into the consciousness of men in spite of the violence of power, and even owing to that violence.

The argument of the defenders of the State, that if power were abolished the wicked would tyrannize over the good, not only fails to prove that the domination of the wicked is a new thing to be dreaded, — as it exists already, — but proves, on the contrary, that the tyranny of the State, which allows the wicked to govern the good, is itself the real evil which we ought to eradicate, and which is constantly decreasing by the very nature of things.

“But if State violence is not to cease until the rulers have become so far Christianized that they will renounce it of their own accord and no others will be found to take their places, — if these things are coming to pass,” say the defenders of the existing order, “when is it to happen? If 1800 years have passed, and still so many long to rule, it is wholly improbable that we shall soon behold this change, if it ever takes place at all.

“Even though there may be at present, as there always have been, certain individuals who would not rule if they could, who do not choose to benefit themselves in that way, still the number of those who do prefer to rule rather than to be ruled is so great that it is difficult to imagine a time when the number will be exhausted.

“In order to accomplish the conversion of all men, to induce each one to exchange the pagan for the Christian life-conception, voluntarily resigning riches and power, there being none left to profit by these, it would be necessary that not only all the rude, half-barbarous people, unfitted either to accept Christianity or follow its precepts, who are always to be found in every Christian community, should become Christians, but that all savage and non-Christian nations, which are still numerous, should also become Christian.

“Therefore were one to admit that the Christianizing process may at some future time embrace all humanity, we must still take into consideration the degree of progress that has been made in 1800 years, and realize that this can only happen after many centuries. Hence we need not for the present trouble ourselves about the overthrow of authority; all we have to do is to look to it that it is in the best hands.”

Thus reply the partizans of the existing system. And this reasoning would be perfectly consistent, provided that the transition of men from one life-conception to another were only to be effected by the process of individual conversion; that is to say, that each man, through his personal experience, should realize the vanity of power, and apprehend Christian truth. This process is constantly going on, and in that way, one by one, men are converted to Christianity.

But men do not become converted to Christianity merely in this way; there is an exterior influence brought to bear which accelerates the process. The progression of mankind from one system of life to another is accomplished not only gradually, as the sand glides through the hour-glass, grain by grain, until all has run out, but rather as water which enters an im-

mersed vessel, at first slowly, at one side, then, borne down by its weight, suddenly plunges, and at once fills completely.

And this is what happens in human communities during a change in their life-conception, which is equivalent to the change from one organization to another. It is only at first that men by degrees, one by one, accept the new truth and obey its dictates; but after it has been to a certain extent disseminated, it is accepted, not through intuition, and not by degrees, but generally and at once, and almost involuntarily.

And therefore the argument of the advocates of the present system, that but a minority have embraced Christianity during the last 1800 years, and that another 1800 years must pass away before the rest of mankind will accept it, is erroneous. For one must take into consideration another mode, in addition to the intuitive of assimilating new truth, and of making the transition from one mode of life to another. This other mode is this: men assimilate a truth not alone because they may have come to realize it through prophetic insight or through individual experience, but the truth having been spread abroad, those who dwell on a lower plane of intelligence accept it at once, because of their confidence in those who have received it and incorporated it in their lives.

Every new truth that changes the manner of life and causes humanity to move onward is at first accepted by a very limited number, who grasp it by knowledge of it. The rest of mankind, accepting on faith the former truth upon which the existing system has been founded, is always opposed to the spread of the new truth.

But as, in the first place, mankind is not stationary, but is ever progressing, growing more and more familiar with truth and approaching nearer to it in everyday life: and secondly, as all men progress according to their opportunities, age, education, nationality, beginning with those who are more, and ending with those who are less, capable of receiving new truth—the men nearest those who have perceived the truth intuitively pass, one

by one, and with gradually diminishing intervals, over to the side of the new truth. So, as the number of men who acknowledge it increases, the truth itself becomes more clearly manifested. The feeling of confidence in the new truth increases in proportion to the numbers who have accepted it. For, owing to the growing intelligibility of the truth itself, it becomes easier for men to grasp it, especially for those lower intellectually, until finally the greater number readily adopt it, and help to found a new *régime*.

The men who go over to the new truth, once it has gained a certain hold, go over *en masse*, of one accord, much as ballast is rapidly put into a ship to maintain its equilibrium. If not ballasted, the vessel would not be sufficiently immersed, and would change its position every moment. This ballast, which at first may seem superfluous and a hindrance to the progress of the ship, is indispensable to its equipoise and motion.

Thus it is with the masses when, under the influence of some new idea that has won social approval, they abandon one system to adopt another, not singly, but in a body. It is the inertia of this mass which impedes the rapid and frequent transition from one system of life, not ratified by wisdom, to another; and which for a long time arrests the progress of every truth destined to become a part of human consciousness.

It is erroneous, then, to argue that because only a small percentage of the human race has in these eighteen centuries adopted the Christian doctrine, that many, many times eighteen centuries must elapse before the whole world will accept it, — a period of time so remote that we who are now living can have no interest in it. It is unfair, because those men who stand on a lower plane of development, whom the partizans of the existing order represent as hindrances to the realization of the Christian system of life, are those men who always go over in a body to a truth accepted by those above them.

And therefore that change in the life of mankind, when the powerful will give up their power without finding any to assume it in their stead, will come to pass when

the Christian life-conception, rendered familiar, conquers, not merely men one by one, but masses at a time.

"But even if it were true," the advocates of the existing order may say, "that public opinion has the power to convert the inert non-Christian mass of men, as well as the corrupt and gross who are to be found in every Christian community, how shall we know that a Christian mode of life is born, and that State violence will be rendered useless?"

"After renouncing the despotism by which the existing order has been maintained, in order to trust to the vague and indefinite force of public opinion, we risk permitting those savages, those existing among us, as well as those outside, to commit robbery, murder, and other outrages upon Christians.

"If even with the help of authority we have a hard struggle against the anti-Christian elements ever ready to overpower us, and destroy all the progress made by civilization, how then could public opinion prove an efficient substitute for the use of force, and avail for our protection? To rely upon public opinion alone would be as foolhardy as to let loose all the wild beasts of a menagerie, because they seem inoffensive when in their cages and held in awe by red-hot irons.

"Those men entrusted with authority, or born to rule over others by the divine will of God, have no right to imperil all the results of civilization, simply to make an experiment, and learn whether public opinion can or cannot be substituted for the safeguard of authority."

Alphonse Karr, a French writer, forgotten to-day, once said, in trying to prove the impossibility of abolishing the death penalty: "*Que Messieurs les assassins commencent par nous donner l'exemple.*" And I have often heard this witticism quoted by persons who really believed they were using a convincing and intellectual argument against the suppression of the penalty of death. Nevertheless, there could be no better argument against the violence of government.

"Let the assassins begin by showing us an example," say the defenders of government authority. The assas-

sins say the same, but with more justice. They say: "Let those who have set themselves up as teachers and guides show us an example by the suppression of legal assassination, and we will imitate it." And this they say, not by way of a jest, but in all seriousness, for such is in reality the situation.

"We cannot cease to use violence while we are surrounded by those who commit violence."

There is no more insuperable barrier at the present time to the progress of humanity, and to the establishment of a system that shall be in harmony with its present conception of life, than this erroneous argument.

Those holding positions of authority are fully convinced that men are to be influenced and controlled by force alone, and therefore to preserve the existing system they do not hesitate to employ it. And yet this very system is supported, not by violence, but by public opinion, the action of which is compromised by violence. The action of violence actually weakens and destroys that which it wishes to support.

At best, violence, if not employed as a vehicle for the ambition of those in high places, condemns in the inflexible form a law which public opinion has most probably long ago repudiated and condemned; but there is this difference, that while public opinion rejects and condemns all acts that are opposed to the moral law, the law supported by force repudiates and condemns only a certain limited number of acts, seeming thus to justify all acts of a like order which have not been included in its formula.

From the time of Moses public opinion has regarded covetousness, lust, and cruelty as crimes, and condemned them as such. It condemns and repudiates every form that covetousness may assume, not only the acquisition of another man's property by violence, fraud, or cunning, but the cruel abuse of wealth as well. It condemns all kinds of lust, let it be impudicity with a mistress, a slave, a divorced wife, or with one's wife; it condemns all cruelty, — blows, bad usage, murder, — all cruelty, not only toward human beings, but toward animals. Whereas, the law,

based upon violence, attacks only certain forms of covetousness, such as theft and fraud, and certain forms of lust and cruelty, such as conjugal infidelity, assault, and murder; and thus it seems to condone those manifestations of covetousness, lust, and cruelty which do not fall within its narrow limits.

But violence not only demoralizes public opinion, it excites in the minds of men a pernicious conviction that they move onward, not through the impulsion of a spiritual power, which would help them to comprehend and realize the truth by bringing them nearer to that moral force which is the source of every progressive movement of mankind, — but, by means of violence, — by the very factor that not only impedes our progress toward truth, but withdraws us from it. This is a fatal error, inasmuch as it inspires in man a contempt for the fundamental principle of his life, — spiritual activity, — and leads him to transfer all his strength and energy to the practice of external violence.

It is as though men would try to put a locomotive in motion by turning its wheels with their hands, not knowing that the expansion of steam was the real motive-power, and that the action of the wheels was but the effect, and not the cause. If by their hands and their levers they move the wheels, it is but the semblance of motion, and, if anything, injures the wheels and makes them useless.

The same mistake is made by those who expect to move the world by violence.

Men affirm that the Christian life cannot be established save by violence, because there are still uncivilized nations outside of the Christian world, in Africa and Asia (some regard even the Chinese as a menace of our civilization), and because, according to the new theory of heredity, there exist in society congenital criminals, savage and irredeemably vicious.

But the savages whom we find in our own community, as well as those beyond its pale, with whom we threaten ourselves and others, have never yielded to violence, and are not yielding to it now. One people

never conquered another by violence alone. If the victors stood on a lower plane of civilization than the conquered, they always adopted the habits and customs of the latter, never attempting to force their own methods of life upon them. It is by the influence of public opinion, not by violence, that nations are reduced to submission.

When a people have accepted a new religion, have become Christians, or turned Mohammedans, it has come to pass, not because it was made obligatory by those in power (violence often produced quite the opposite result), but because they were influenced by public opinion. Nations constrained by violence to accept the religion of the conqueror have never really done so.

The same may be said in regard to the savage elements found in all communities: neither severity nor clemency in the matter of punishments, nor modifications in the prison system, nor augmenting of the police force, have either diminished or increased the aggregate of crimes, which will only decrease through an evolution in our manner of life. No severities have ever succeeded in suppressing the vendetta, or the custom of dueling in certain countries. However many of his fellows may be put to death for thieving, the Tcherkess continues to steal out of vainglory. No girl will marry a Tcherkess who has not proved his daring by stealing a horse, or at least a sheep. When men no longer fight duels, and the Tcherkess cease to steal, it will not be from fear of punishment (the danger of capital punishment adds to the prestige of daring), but because public manners will have undergone a change. The same may be said of all other crimes. Violence can never suppress that which is countenanced by general custom. If public opinion would but frown upon violence, it would destroy all its power.

What would happen if violence were not employed against hostile nations and the criminal element in society we do not know. But that the use of violence subdues neither we do know through long experience.

And how can we expect to subdue by violence nations whose education, traditions, and even religious training all tend to glorify resistance to the conqueror, and love of liberty as the loftiest of virtues? And how is it possible to extirpate crime by violence in the midst of communities where the same act, regarded by the government as criminal, is transformed into an heroic exploit by public opinion?

Nations and races may be destroyed by violence — it has been done. They cannot be subdued.

The power transcending all others which has influenced individuals and nations since time began, that power which is the convergence of the invisible, intangible, spiritual forces of all humanity, is public opinion.

Violence serves but to enervate this influence, disintegrating it, and substituting for it one not only useless, but pernicious to the welfare of humanity.

In order to win over all those outside the Christian fold, all the Zulus, the Manchurians, the Chinese, whom many consider uncivilized, and the uncivilized among ourselves, there is *only one way*. This is by the diffusion of a Christian mode of thought, which is only to be accomplished by a Christian life, Christian deeds, a Christian example. But instead of employing this *one way* of winning those who have remained outside the fold of Christianity, men of our epoch have done just the opposite.

In order to convert uncivilized nations who do us no harm, whom we have no motive for oppressing, we ought, above all, to leave them in peace, and act upon them only by our showing them an example of the Christian virtues of patience, meekness, temperance, purity, and brotherly love. Instead of this we begin by seizing their territory, and establishing among them new marts for our commerce, with the sole view of furthering our own interests — we, in fact, rob them; we sell them wine, tobacco, and opium, and thereby demoralize them; we establish our own customs among them, we teach them violence and all its lessons; we teach them the animal law of strife, that lowest depth of human degradation, and do all that we can to con-

ceal the Christian virtues we possess. Then, having sent them a score of missionaries, who gabble an absurd clerical jargon, we quote the results of our attempt to convert the heathen as an indubitable proof that the truths of Christianity are not adaptable to everyday life.

And as for those whom we call criminals, who live in our midst, all that has just been said applies equally to them. There is only *one way* to convert them, and that is by means of a public opinion founded on true Christianity, accompanied by the example of a sincere Christian life. And by way of preaching this Christian gospel and confirming it by Christian example, we imprison, we execute, guillotine, hang; we encourage the masses in idolatrous religions calculated to stultify them; the government authorizes the sale of brain-destroying poisons—wine, tobacco, opium; prostitution is legalized; we bestow land upon those who need it not; surrounded by misery, we display in our entertainments an unbridled extravagance; we render impossible in such ways any semblance of a Christian life, and do our best to destroy Christian ideas already established; and then, after doing all we can to demoralize men, we take and confine them like wild beasts in places from which they cannot escape, and where they will become more brutal than ever; or we murder the men we have demoralized, and then use them as an example to illustrate and prove our argument that people are only to be controlled by violence.

Even so does the ignorant physician act, who, having placed his patient in the most unsanitary conditions, or having administered to him poisonous drugs, afterward contends that his patient has succumbed to the disease, when had he been left to himself he would have recovered long ago.

Violence, which men regard as an instrument for the support of Christian life, on the contrary, prevents the social system from reaching its full and perfect development. The social system is such as it is, not because of violence, but in spite of it.

Therefore the defenders of the existing social system are self-deceived when they say that, since violence barely holds the evil and un-Christian elements of society in awe, its subversion, and the substitution of the moral influence of public opinion, would leave us helpless in face of them. They are wrong, because violence does not protect mankind; but it deprives men of the only possible chance of an effectual defense by the establishment and propagation of the Christian principle of life.

"But how can one discard the visible and tangible protection of the policeman with his baton, and trust to invisible, intangible public opinion? And, moreover, is not its very existence problematical? We are all familiar with the actual state of things; whether it be good or bad we know its faults, and are accustomed to them; we know how to conduct ourselves, how to act in the present conditions; but what will happen when we renounce the present organization, and confide ourselves to something invisible, intangible, and utterly unfamiliar?"

Men dread the uncertainty into which they would plunge if they were to renounce the familiar order of things. Certainly were our situation an assured and stable one, it would be well to dread the uncertainties of change. But so far from enjoying an assured position, we know that we are on the verge of a catastrophe.

If we are to give way to fear, then let it be before something that is really fearful, and not before something that we imagine may be so.

In fearing to make an effort to escape from conditions that are fatal to us, only because the future is obscure and unknown, we are like the passengers of a sinking ship who crowd into the cabin and refuse to leave it, because they have not the courage to enter the boat that would carry them to the shore; or like sheep who, in fear of the fire that has broken out in the farmyard, huddle together in a corner and will not go out through the open gate.

How can we, who stand on the threshold of a shocking and devastating social war, before which, as those who are preparing for it tell us, the horrors of 1793 will

pale, talk seriously about the danger threatened by the natives of Dahomey, the Zulus, and others who live far away, and who have no intention of attacking us; or about the few thousands of malefactors, thieves, and murderers — men whom we have helped to demoralize, and whose numbers are not decreased by all our courts, prisons, and executions?

Moreover, this anxiety lest the visible protection of the police be overthrown, is chiefly confined to the inhabitants of cities — that is, to those who live under abnormal and artificial conditions. Those who live normally in the midst of nature, dealing with its forces, require no such protection; they realize how little avails violence to protect us from the real danger that surrounds us. There is something morbid in this fear, which arises chiefly from the false conditions in which most of us have grown up and continue to live.

A doctor to the insane related how, one day in summer, when he was about to leave the asylum, the patients accompanied him as far as the gate that led into the street.

“Come with me into town!” he proposed to them.

The patients agreed, and a little band followed him. But the farther they went through the streets where they met their sane fellow-men moving freely to and fro, the more timid they grew, and pressed more closely around the doctor. At last they begged to be taken back to the asylum, to their old but accustomed mode of insane life, to their keepers and their rough ways, to strait jackets and solitary confinement.

And thus it is with those whom Christianity is waiting to set free, to whom it offers the untrammelled rational life of the future, the coming century; they huddle together and cling to their insane customs, to their factories, courts, and prisons, their executioners, and their warfare.

They ask: “What security will there be for us when the existing order has been swept away? What kind of laws are to take the place of those under which we are now living? Not until we know exactly how our

life is to be ordered will we take a single step toward making a change." It is as if a discoverer were to insist upon a detailed description of the region he is about to explore. If the individual man, while passing from one period of his life to another, could read the future and know just what his whole life were to be, he would have no reason for living. And so it is with the career of humanity. If, upon entering a new period, a program detailing the incidents of its future existence were possible, humanity would stagnate.

We cannot know the conditions of the new order of things, because we have to work them out for ourselves. The meaning of life is to search out that which is hidden, and then to conform our activity to our new knowledge. This is the life of the individual as it is the life of humanity.

CHAPTER XI

CHRISTIAN PUBLIC OPINION ALREADY ARISES IN OUR SOCIETY, AND WILL INEVITABLY DESTROY THE SYSTEM OF VIOLENCE OF OUR LIFE. WHEN THIS WILL COME ABOUT

The condition and organization of our society is shocking ; it is upheld by public opinion, but can be abolished by it—Men's views in regard to violence have already changed; the number of men ready to serve the governments decreases, and functionaries of government themselves begin to be ashamed of their position, to the point of often not fulfilling their duties—These facts, signs of the birth of a public opinion, which, in becoming more and more general, will lead finally to the impossibility of finding men willing to serve governments—It becomes more and more clear that such positions are no longer needed—Men begin to realize the uselessness of all the institutions of violence; and if this is realized by a few men, it will later be understood by all—The time when the deliverance will be accomplished is unknown, but it depends on men themselves; it depends on how much each man is willing to live by the light that is within him.

THE position of the Christian nations, with their prisons, their gallows, their factories, their accumulations of capital, taxes, churches, taverns, and public brothels, their increasing armaments, and their millions

of besotted men, ready, like dogs, to spring at a word from the master, would be shocking indeed if it were the result of violence ; but such a state of things is, before all, the result of public opinion ; and what has been established by public opinion not only may be, but will be, overthrown by it.

Millions and millions of money, tens of millions of disciplined soldiers, marvelous weapons of destruction, an infinitely perfected organization, legions of men charged to delude and hypnotize the people, — this is all under the control of men who believe that this organization is advantageous for them, who know that without it they would disappear, and who therefore devote all their energy to its maintenance. What an indomitable array of power it seems ! And yet we have but to realize whither we are fatally tending, for men to become as much ashamed of acts of violence, and to profit by them, as they are ashamed now of dishonesty, theft, beggary, cowardice ; and the whole complicated and apparently omnipotent system will die at once without any struggle. To accomplish this transformation it is not necessary that any new ideas should find their way into the human consciousness, but only that the mist which now veils the true significance of violence should lift, in order that the growing Christian public opinion and methods may conquer the methods of the pagan world. And this is gradually coming to pass. We do not observe it, as we do not observe the movement of things when we are turning, and everything around us is turning as well.

It is true that the social organization seems for the most part as much under the influence of violence as it seemed a thousand years ago, and in respect of armaments and war seems even more ; but the Christian view of life is already having its effect. The withered tree, to all appearance, stands as firmly as ever ; it seems even firmer, because it has grown harder, but it is already rotten at the heart and preparing to fall. It is the same with the present mode of life based upon violence. The outward position of man appears the same. There are the same oppressors, the same op-

pressed, but the feeling of both classes in regard to their respective positions has undergone a change. The oppressors, that is, those who take part in the government, and those who are benefited by oppression, the wealthy classes, do not constitute, as formerly, the *élite* of society, nor does their condition suggest that ideal of human prosperity and greatness to which formerly all the oppressed aspired. Now, it often happens that the oppressors renounce of their own accord the advantages of their position, choosing the position of the oppressed, and endeavor, by the simplicity of their mode of life, to resemble them.

Not to speak of those offices and positions generally considered contemptible, such as that of the spy, the detective, the usurer, or the keeper of a tavern, a great many of the positions held by the oppressors, and formerly considered honorable, such as those of police officers, courtiers, judges, administrative functionaries, ecclesiastical or military, masters on a large scale, and bankers, are not only considered little enviable, but are already avoided by estimable men. Already there are men who choose to renounce such once envied positions, preferring others which, although less advantageous, are not associated with violence.

It is not merely such as these who renounce their privileges; men influenced, not by religious motives, as was the case in former ages, but by growing public opinion, refuse to accept fortunes fallen to them by inheritance, because they believe that a man ought to possess only the fruits of his own labor.

High-minded youths, not as yet depraved by life, when about to choose a career, prefer the professions of doctors, engineers, teachers, artists, writers, or even of farmers, who live by their daily toil, to the positions of judges, administrators, priests, soldiers in the pay of government; they decline even the position of living on their income.

Most of the monuments at the present day are no longer erected in honor of statesmen or generals, still less of men of wealth, but to scientists, artists, and in-

ventors, to men who not only had nothing in common with government or authority, but who frequently opposed it. It is to their memory that the arts are thus consecrated.

The class of men who will govern, and of rich men, tends every day to grow less numerous, and so far as intellect, education, and especially morality, are concerned, rich men and men in power are not the most distinguished members of society, as was the case in olden times. In Russia and Turkey, as in France and America, notwithstanding the frequent changes of officials, the greater number are often covetous and venal, and so little to be commended from the point of view of morality that they do not satisfy even the elementary exigencies of honesty demanded in government posts. Thus one hears often the ingenuous complaints of those in government that the best men among us, strangely enough as it seems to them, are always found among those opposed to them. It is as if one complained that it is not the nice, good people who become hangmen.

Rich men of the present day, as a general thing, are mere vulgar amassers of wealth, for the most part having but little care beyond that of increasing their capital, and that most often by impure means; or are the degenerate inheritors, who, far from playing an important part in society, often incur general contempt.

Many positions have lost their ancient importance. Kings and emperors now hardly direct at all; they seldom effect internal changes or modify external policy, leaving the decision of such questions to the departments of State, or to public opinion. Their function is reduced to being the representatives of state unity and power. But even this duty they begin to neglect. Most of them not only fail to maintain themselves in their former unapproachable majesty, but they grow more and more democratic, they prefer even to be bourgeois; they lay down thus their last distinction, destroying precisely what they are expected to maintain.

The same may be said of the army. The high officers, instead of encouraging the roughness and cruelty

of the soldiers, which befit their occupation, promote the diffusion of education among them, preach humanity, often sympathize with the socialistic ideas of the masses, and deny the utility of war. In the late conspiracies against the Russian government many of those concerned were military men. It often happens, as it did recently, that the troops, when called upon to establish order, refuse to fire on the people. The barrack code of ideas is frankly deprecated by military men themselves, who often enough make it the subject of derision.

The same may be said of judges and lawyers. Judges, whose duty it is to judge and condemn criminals, conduct their trials in such a fashion as to prove them innocent; thus the Russian government, when it desires the condemnation of those it wishes to punish, never confides them to the ordinary tribunals; it tries them by court-martial, which is but a parody of justice. The same may be said of lawyers, who often refuse to accuse, and, twisting round the law, defend those they should accuse. Learned jurists, whose duty it is to justify the violence of authority, deny more and more frequently the right of punishment, and in its place introduce theories of irresponsibility, often prescribing, not punishment, but medical treatment for so-called criminals.

Jailers and turnkeys in convict prisons often become the protectors of those it is a part of their business to torture. Policemen and detectives are constantly saving those they ought to arrest. Ecclesiastics preach tolerance; they often deny the right of violence, and the more educated among them attempt in their sermons to avoid the deception which constitutes all the meaning of their position, and which they are expected to preach. Executioners refuse to perform their duty; the result is that often in Russia death-warrants cannot be carried out for lack of executioners, for, notwithstanding all the advantages of the position, the candidates, who are chosen from convicts, diminish in number every year. Governors, commissioners, and tax-collectors, pitying the people, often try to find pretexts

for remitting the taxes. Rich men no longer dare to use their wealth for themselves alone, but sacrifice a part of it to social charities. Landowners establish hospitals and schools on their estates, and some even renounce their estates and bestow them on the cultivators of the soil, or establish agricultural colonies upon them. Manufacturers and mill-owners found schools, hospitals, and savings-banks, institute pensions, and build houses for the workmen; some start associations of which the profits are equally divided among all. Capitalists expend a portion of their wealth on educational, artistic, and philanthropic institutions for the public benefit. Many men who are unwilling to part with their riches during their lifetime bequeath them to public institutions.

These facts might be deemed the result of chance were it not that they all originate from one source, as, when certain trees begin to bud in the spring of the year, we might believe it accidental, only we know the cause; and that if on some trees the buds begin to swell, we know that the same thing will happen to all of them.

Even so is it in regard to Christian public opinion and its manifestations. If this public opinion already influences some of the more sensitive men, and makes each one in his own sphere decline the advantages obtained by violence or its use, it will continue to influence men more and more, until it brings about a change in their mode of life and reconciles it with that Christian consciousness already possessed by the most advanced.

And if there are already rulers who do not venture on any undertaking on their own responsibility, and who try to be like ordinary men rather than monarchs, who declare themselves ready to give up their prerogatives and become the first citizens of their country, and soldiers who, realizing all the sin and evil of war, do not wish to kill either foreigners or their fellow-countrymen, judges and lawyers who do not wish to accuse and condemn criminals, priests who evade preaching lies, tax-gatherers who endeavor to fulfil as gently as

possible what they are called upon to do, and rich men who give up their wealth, then surely it will ultimately come to pass that other rulers, soldiers, priests, and rich men will follow their example. And when there are no more men ready to occupy positions supported by violence, the positions themselves will cease to exist.

But this is not the only way by which public opinion leads toward the abolition of the existing system, and the substitution of a new one. As the positions supported by violence become by degrees less and less attractive, and there are fewer and fewer applicants to fill them, their uselessness becomes more and more apparent.

We have to-day the same rulers and governments, the same armies, courts of law, tax-gatherers, priests, wealthy landowners, manufacturers, and capitalists as formerly, but their relative positions are changed.

The same rulers go about to their various interviews, they have the same meetings, hunts, festivities, balls, and uniforms; the same diplomatists have the same conversations about alliances and armies; the same parliaments, in which Eastern and African questions are discussed, and questions in regard to alliances, ruptures, "Home Rule," the eight-hour day. Changes of ministry take place just as of old, accompanied by the same speeches and incidents. But to those who know how an article in a newspaper changes perhaps the position of affairs more than dozens of royal interviews and parliamentary sessions, it becomes more and more evident that it is not these meetings, interviews, and parliamentary discussions that control affairs, but something independent of all this, something which has no local habitation.

The same generals, officers, soldiers, cannon, fortresses, parades, and evolutions. But one year elapses, ten, twenty years elapse, and there is no war. And troops are less and less to be relied on to suppress insurrection, and it becomes more and more evident that generals, officers, and soldiers are only figure-heads in

triumphal processions, the plaything of a sovereign, a sort of unwieldy and expensive *corps-de-ballet*.

The same lawyers and judges, and the same sessions, but it becomes more and more evident that as civil courts make decisions in a great variety of causes without anxiety about purely legal justice, and that criminal courts are useless, because the punishment does not produce the desired result, therefore these institutions have no other object than the maintenance of men incapable of doing other things more useful.

The same priests, bishops, churches, and synods, but it becomes more and more evident to all that these men themselves have long since ceased to believe what they preach, and are therefore unable to persuade any one of the necessity of believing what they no longer believe themselves.

The same tax-gatherers, but more and more incapable of extorting money from the people by force, and it becomes more and more evident that, without such collectors, it would be possible to obtain by voluntary contribution all that is required for social needs.

The same rich men, and yet it becomes more and more evident that they can be useful only when they cease to be personal administrators of their possessions, and surrender to society their wealth in whole or part.

When this becomes as plain to all men as it now is to a few, the question will naturally arise: Why should we feed and support all those emperors, kings, presidents, members of departments, and ministers, if all their interviews and conversations amount to nothing? Would it not be better, as some wit expressed it, to set up an india-rubber queen?

And of what use to us are armies, with their generals, their musicians, their horses, and drums? Of what use are they when there is no war, when no one wishes to conquer anybody else? And even if there were a war, other nations would prevent us from reaping its advantages; while upon their compatriots the troops would refuse to fire.

And what is the use of judges and attorneys whose

decisions in civil cases are not according to the law, and who, in criminal ones, are aware that punishments are of no avail?

And of what use are tax-gatherers who are reluctant to collect the taxes, when all that is needed could be contributed without their assistance?

And where is the use of a clergy which has long ceased to believe what it preaches?

And of what use is capital in the hands of private individuals when it can be beneficial only when it becomes public property? Having once asked all these questions, men cannot but arrive at the conclusion that institutions which have lost their usefulness should no longer be supported.

And furthermore, men who themselves occupy positions of privilege come to see the necessity of abandoning them.

One day, in Moscow, I was present at a religious discussion which is usually held during St. Thomas's week, near the church in the Okhotny Ryad. A group of perhaps twenty men had gathered on the pavement, and a serious discussion concerning religion was in progress. Meanwhile, in the nobles' club near at hand, a concert was taking place, and a police-officer, having noticed the group of people gathered near the church, sent a mounted policeman to order them to disperse, — not that the police-officer cared in the least whether the group stayed where it was or dispersed. The twenty men who had gathered inconvenienced no one, but the officer had been on duty all the morning and felt obliged to do something. The young policeman, a smart-looking fellow, with his right arm akimbo and a clanking sword, rode up to us, calling out in an imperative tone: "Disperse, you fellows! What business have you to gather there?" Every one turned to look at him, while one of the speakers, a modest-looking man in a peasant's coat, replied calmly and pleasantly: "We are talking about business, and there is no reason why we should disperse; it might be better for you, my young friend, if you were to jump off from

your horse and to listen to us. Very likely it would do you good;" and turning away he continued the conversation. The policeman turned his horse without a word and rode away.

Such scenes as this must be of frequent occurrence in countries where violence is employed. The officer was bored; he had nothing to do, and the poor fellow was placed in a position where he felt in duty bound to give orders. He was deprived of a rational human existence; he could do nothing but look on and give orders, give orders and look on, although both were works of supererogation. It will not be long before all those unfortunate rulers, ministers, members of parliaments, governors, generals, officers, bishops, priests, and even rich men, will find themselves — indeed they have already done so — in precisely the same position. Their sole occupation consists in issuing orders; they send out their subordinates, like the officer who sent the policeman to interfere with the people; and as the people with whom they interfere ask not to be interfered with, this seems to their official intelligence only to prove that they are very necessary.

But the time will surely come when it will be perfectly evident to every one that they are not only useless, but an actual impediment, and those whose course they obstruct will say gently and pleasantly, like the man in the peasant's coat: "We beg that you will let us alone." Then the subordinates as well as their instructors will find themselves compelled to take the good advice that is offered them, cease to prance about among men with their arms akimbo, and having discarded their glittering livery, listen to what is said among men, and unite with them to help to promote the serious work of the world.

Sooner or later the time will surely come when all the present institutions supported by violence will cease to be; their too evident uselessness, absurdity, and even unseemliness, will finally destroy them.

There must come a time when the same thing that happened to the king in Andersen's fairy tale, "The

King's New Clothes," will happen to men occupying positions created by violence.

The tale tells of a king who cared enormously for new clothes, and to whom one day came two tailors who agreed to make him a suit woven from a wonderful stuff. The king engaged them and they set to work, saying that the stuff possessed the remarkable quality of becoming invisible to any one unfit for the office he holds. The courtiers came to inspect the work of the tailors, but could see nothing, because these men were drawing their needles through empty space. However, remembering the consequences, they all pretended to see the cloth and to be very much pleased with it. Even the king himself praised it. The hour appointed for the procession when he was to walk wearing his new garment arrived. The king took off his clothes and put on the new ones — that is, he remained naked all the while, and thus he went in procession. But remembering the consequences, no one had the courage to say that he was not dressed, until a little child, catching sight of the naked king, innocently exclaimed, "But he has nothing on!" Whereupon all the others who had known this before, but had not acknowledged it, could no longer conceal the fact.

Thus will it be with those who, through inertia, continue to fill offices that have long ceased to be of any consequence, until some chance observer, who happens not to be engaged, as the Russian proverb has it, in "washing one hand with the other," will ingenuously exclaim, "It is a long time since these men were good for anything!"

The position of the Christian world, with its fortresses, cannon, dynamite, guns, torpedoes, prisons, gallows, churches, factories, custom-houses, and palaces is monstrous. But neither fortresses nor cannon nor guns by themselves can make war, nor can the prisons lock their gates, nor the gallows hang, nor the churches themselves lead men astray, nor the custom-houses claim their dues, nor palaces and factories build and support themselves; all these operations are performed by men. And when

men understand that they need not make them, then these things will cease to be.

And already men are beginning to understand this. If not yet understood by all, it is already understood by those whom the rest of the world eventually follows. And it is impossible to cease to understand what once has been understood, and the masses not only can, but inevitably must, follow where those who have understood have already led the way. •

Hence the prophecy: that a time will come when all men will hearken unto the word of God, will forget the arts of war, will melt their swords into plowshares and their lances into reaping-hooks;—which, being translated, means when all the prisons, the fortresses, the barracks, the palaces, and the churches will remain empty, the gallows and the cannon will be useless. This is no longer a mere Utopia, but a new and definite system of life, toward which mankind is progressing with ever increasing rapidity.

But when will it come?

Eighteen hundred years ago Christ, in answer to this question, replied that the end of the present world—that is, of the pagan system—would come when the miseries of man had increased to their utmost limit; and when, at the same time, the good news of the Kingdom of Heaven—that is, of the possibility of a new system, one not founded upon violence—should be proclaimed throughout the earth.¹

“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only,”² said Christ. “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”

When will the hour arrive? Christ said that we cannot know. And for that very reason we should hold ourselves in readiness to meet it, as the goodman should watch his house against thieves, or like the virgins who await with their lamps the coming of the bridegroom; and, moreover, we should work with all our might to hasten the coming of that hour, as the servants should

¹ Matt. xxiv. 3-28.

² Matt. xxiv. 36.

use the talents they have received that they may increase.¹

And there can be no other answer. The day and the hour of the advent of the Kingdom of God men cannot know, since the coming of that hour depends only on men themselves.

The reply is like that of the wise man who, when the traveler asked him how far he was from the city, answered, "Go on!"

How can we know if it is still far to the goal toward which humanity is aiming, when we do not know how it will move toward it; that it depends on humanity whether it moves steadily onward or pauses, whether it accelerates or retards its pace.

All that we can know is what we who form humanity should or should not do in order to bring about this Kingdom of God. And that we all know; for each one has but to begin to do his duty, each one has but to live according to the light that is within him, to bring about the immediate advent of the promised Kingdom of God, for which the heart of every man yearns.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

"REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND!"

I

Encounter with a train carrying soldiers to establish order among famine-stricken peasants—The cause of the disorder—How the mandates of the higher authorities are carried out in case of peasants' resistance—The affair at Orel as an example of violence and murder committed for the purpose of asserting the rights of the rich—All the advantages of the rich are founded on like acts of violence.

2

The Tula train and the behavior of the persons composing it—How men can behave as these do—The reasons are neither ignorance, nor cruelty,

¹ Matt. xxiv. 43; xxv. 1-13, 14-30.

nor cowardice, nor lack of comprehension or of moral sense — They do these things because they think them necessary to maintain the existing system, to support which they believe to be every man's duty — On what the belief of the necessity and immutability of the existing order of things is founded — For the upper classes it is based on the advantages it affords them — But what compels men of the lower classes to believe in the immutability of this system, when they derive no advantage from it, and maintain it with acts contrary to their conscience? — The reason lies in the deceit practised by the upper classes upon the lower in regard to the necessity of the existing order, and the legitimacy of acts of violence for its maintenance — General deception — Special deception — The conscription.

3

How men reconcile the legitimacy of murder with the precepts of morality, and how they admit the existence in their midst of a military organization for purposes of violence which incessantly threatens the safety of society — Admitted only by the powers for whom the present organization is advantageous — Violence sanctioned by the higher authorities and carried out by the lower, notwithstanding the knowledge of its immorality, because, owing to the organization of the State, the moral responsibility is divided among a large number of participants, each of whom considers some other than himself responsible — Moreover, the loss of consciousness of moral responsibility is also due to a mistaken opinion as to the inequality of men, the consequent abuse of power by the authorities, and servility of the lower classes — The condition of men who commit acts contrary to their conscience is like the condition of a hypnotized person acting under the influence of suggestion — In what does submission to the suggestion of the State differ from submission to men of a higher order of consciousness or to public opinion? — The present system, which is the outcome of ancient public opinion, and which is already in contradiction to the modern, is maintained only through torpor of conscience, induced by auto-suggestion among the upper classes, and by the hypnotization of the lower — The conscience or intelligent consciousness of these men may awaken, and there are instances when it does awaken; therefore it cannot be said that any one of them will, or will not, do what he sets out to do — Everything depends on the degree of comprehension of the illegitimacy of the acts of violence, and this consciousness in men may either awaken spontaneously or be roused by those already awakened.

4

Everything depends upon the strength of conviction of each individual man in regard to Christian truth — But the advanced men of the present day consider it unnecessary to explain and profess Christian truth, regarding it sufficient for the improvement of human life to change its outward conditions within the limits allowed by power — Upon this scientific theory of hypocrisy, which has taken the place of the hypocrisy of religion, men of the wealthy classes base the justification of their position — In consequence of this hypocrisy, maintained by violence and

falsehood, they can pretend before each other to be Christians, and rest content—The same hypocrisy allows men who preach the Christian doctrine to take part in a *régime* of violence—No external improvements of life can make it less miserable; its miseries are caused by disunion; disunion springs from following falsehood instead of truth—Union is possible only in truth—Hypocrisy forbids such a union, for while remaining hypocrites, men conceal from themselves and others the truth they know—Hypocrisy changes into evil everything destined to ameliorate life—it perverts the conception of right and wrong, and therefore is a bar to the perfection of men—Acknowledged malefactors and criminals do less harm than those who live by legalized violence cloaked by hypocrisy—All recognize the iniquity of our life, and would long since have modified it, if it were not covered by the cloak of hypocrisy—But it seems as if we had reached the limits of hypocrisy, and have but to make an effort of consciousness in order to awaken—like the man who has nightmare—to a different reality.

5

Can man make this effort?—According to the existing hypocritical theory, man is not free to change his life—He is not free in his acts, but is always free to acknowledge or disregard certain truths already known to him—The recognition of truth is the cause of action—The cause of the apparent insolvability of the question of man's freedom—It lies only in the acknowledgment of the truth revealed unto him—No other freedom exists—The acknowledgment of the truth gives freedom, and points the way in which a man, willingly or unwillingly, must walk—The recognition of truth and of true freedom allows man to become a participant of the work of God, to be not the slave but a creator of life—Men have but to forego the attempt to improve the external conditions of life, and direct all their energies toward the recognition and profession of the truth that is known to them, and the present painful system of life will vanish forthwith, and that portion of the Kingdom of God which is accessible to men would be established—One has only to cease lying and shamming to accomplish this—But what awaits us in the future?—What will happen to mankind when they begin to obey the dictates of their conscience, and how will they exist without the customary conditions of civilization?—Nothing truly good and beneficial can perish because of the realization of the truth, but will only increase in strength when freed from the admixture of falsehood and hypocrisy.

6

Our system of life has reached the limit of misery, and cannot be ameliorated by any pagan reorganization—All our life, with its pagan institutions, is devoid of meaning—Are we obeying the will of God in maintaining our present privileges and obligations?—We are in this position, not because such is the law of the universe, that it is inevitable, but because we wish it, because it is advantageous for some of us—All our consciousness contradicts this, and our deliverance consists in acknowledging the Christian truth, not to do to one's neighbor that which one

would not have done to one's self — As our obligations in regard to ourselves should be subordinate to our obligations to others, so in like manner our obligations to others should be subordinate to our obligations to God — Deliverance from our position consists, if not in giving up our position and its rights at once, at least in acknowledging our guilt, and neither lying nor trying to justify ourselves — The true significance of our life consists in knowing and professing the truth, whereas our approval of, and our activity in, the service of the State takes all meaning from life — God demands that we serve Him, that is, that we seek to establish the greatest degree of union among all human beings, which union is possible only in truth.

I WAS just putting the finishing touches to this two years' work when, on the 9th day of September,¹ I had occasion to go by rail to visit districts in the governments of Tula and Ryazan, where certain peasants were suffering from last year's famine, and others were enduring still greater suffering from the same causes this year.² At one of the stations the train in which I was a passenger met the express, which carried the Governor and troops supplied with rods and loaded rifles for torturing and murdering the famine-stricken peasants.

Although corporal punishment was legally abolished in Russia thirty years ago, the custom of flogging as a means of making the decisions of authority respected has been revived, and has of late been frequently employed. I had heard of it, had read in the papers of the frightful tortures of which the Governor of Nijni-Novgorod, Baranov, has gone so far as to boast, and of the tortures that have been inflicted in Tchernigov, Tambov, Saratov, Astrakhan, and Örel, but I had never yet witnessed, as I did now, how these things were actually done.

And I myself saw well-meaning Russians, penetrated with the spirit of Christ, but armed with muskets and carrying rods, on their way to murder and torture their starving brothers.

The pretext was as follows:—

On the estate of a rich landowner, upon a piece of ground held by him in common with the peasants, a forest had been allowed to grow. (When I say that

¹ 1892. — Tr.

² 1893.

the forest "grew," I mean that the peasants had not only planted it, but had continued to take care of it.) They had always had the use of it, and therefore looked upon it as their own, or at least as common property; but the landowner, confiscating it entirely to himself, began to cut down the trees. The peasants lodged a complaint. The judge of the lower court pronounced an illegal decision (I call it illegal on the authority of the Procureur¹ and the Governor, who surely ought to understand the case) in favor of the landowner. The higher courts, as well as the Senate, although they could see that the case had been unfairly tried, confirmed the decision, and the wood was awarded to the landowner, who continued to fell the trees. But the peasants, believing it impossible that such an injustice could be perpetrated by the higher magistrates, refused to submit to the decision, and drove away the workmen sent to cut down the trees, saying that the forest belonged to them, and that they would appeal to the Czar himself before they would allow it to be touched.

The case was reported to St. Petersburg, from whence the Governor received the order to enforce the decision of the courts, and in order to execute the command, asked for troops.

Hence these soldiers who, armed with bayonets and provided with cartridges and rods expressly prepared for the occasion and stored in one of the vans, were on their way to enforce the decision of the higher authorities. The execution of an order from the ruling powers can be accomplished either by threats of torture and death, or by the enforcement of those threats, according to the degree of resistance on the part of the people.

If, for instance, in Russia (it is practically the same in other lands where state authority and the rights of ownership exist), the peasants offer to resist, the result is as follows: The superior officer makes a speech and orders them to obey. The excited crowd, accustomed to be duped by those in high places, understands not a word that the representative of authority is saying in

¹ Attorney-General.

his official, conventional language, and is by no means pacified. Whereupon the commanding officer declares that unless they submit and disperse, he will be forced to have recourse to arms. If the crowd still refuses to yield and does not disperse, he orders his men to load the muskets and to fire over their heads, and then, if the peasants still stand their ground, he orders the soldiers to aim at the crowds; they fire, and men fall wounded and killed in the street. The crowd is dispersed, the soldiers, carrying out the orders of their commanders, having laid hands upon those whom they suppose to be the chief instigators, and arrested them. The dying, stained with blood, the wounded, mutilated, and dead, among whom are often women and children, are picked up. The dead are buried, the wounded sent to the hospitals. Those who are supposed to be the ring-leaders are taken to the city and court-martialed, and if proved that they have used violence, they are summarily hung. This has happened in Russia repeatedly, and similar scenes must take place wherever the system of government is based upon violence. Such is the course adopted in cases of revolt.

If, on the other hand, the peasants submit, the scene that ensues is entirely original and peculiarly Russian. The Governor, on his arrival at the place, either quarters the soldiers in the different houses of the village, where their maintenance ruins the peasants, or, satisfied by threatening the people, he graciously pardons them and departs. Or, as more frequently happens, he addresses the multitude, upbraids it for disobedience, and announces that the ringleaders must be punished; he seizes a certain number of men considered as such, and without any form of trial causes them to be beaten with rods in his presence.

In order to give an idea of the manner in which such an affair is conducted, I will describe an instance of the kind which happened in Orel, which was approved by the higher authorities. Like the landowner in Tula, the landed proprietor at Orel chose to take possession of the peasants' property, and here, too, as in the former

instance, the peasants resisted. In this case, the landowner, without the consent of the peasants, wished to dam up, for the benefit of his mill, a flow of water which supplied the meadows. The peasants resisted this.

The landlord lodged a complaint with the rural commissary, who illegally (as was afterward admitted by the court) decided the case in favor of the landowner, giving him leave to divert the water. The landowner sent workmen to close the channel through which the water descended. The peasants, excited at this unfair judgment, sent their women to prevent the landowner's men from damming the channel. The women proceeded to the dam, upset the carts, and drove the workmen away. The landowner entered a complaint against them for committing a lawless act. The rural commissary gave the order to arrest and lock up in the village jail one woman out of every family, — an order rather difficult to execute, since each family included several women; and as it was impossible to tell which of them to arrest, the police could not fulfil the order. The landowner complained to the Governor of the laxity of the police. The Governor, without stopping to consider the case, gave strict orders to the *Ispravnik* to carry out at once the orders of the rural commissary. In obedience to his superior the *Ispravnik* arrived in the village, and with that contempt for the individual peculiar to Russian authorities, ordered the police to seize the first women they could. Disputes and resistance arose. The *Ispravnik*, paying no attention to this, persisted in his order that the police should take one woman, innocent or guilty, from every household, and put her under arrest. The peasants defended their wives and mothers; they refused to give them up, and resisted the police and the *Ispravnik*. Thus another and a greater offense was committed, — resistance to authority, — which was at once reported in town. Then the Governor, just as I saw the Governor of Tula, with a battalion of soldiers supplied with rods and muskets, backed by all due accessories of telegraph and telephone, accompanied by a learned physician who was to superintend the flogging

from a medical standpoint, started on an express train for the spot, like the modern Genghis Khan predicted by Herzen. In the *Volostnoye Pravlenie*¹ were the soldiers, a detachment of police with their revolvers suspended on red cords, the principal peasants of the neighborhood, and the men accused. Around them had collected a crowd of perhaps a thousand.

Driving up to the house of the *Volostnoye Pravlenie*, the Governor alighted from his carriage and delivered an address, which had been prepared in advance, after which he inquired for the criminals, and ordered a bench to be brought. No one understood what he meant until the policeman, who always accompanied the Governor and made all the arrangements for the punishments which had already been enforced several times in the government of Orel, explained that the bench was to be used for flogging. This bench and the rods that had been brought by the party were both produced. The executioners had been previously selected from certain horse-thieves taken from the same village, the military having refused to do the business.

When all was ready the Governor bade the first of the twelve men who were pointed out to him by the landowner as the ringleaders to step forward. It so happened that he was the father of a family, a man forty-five years of age, respected in the community, whose rights he had manfully defended.

He was led to the bench, stripped, and ordered to lie down.

He would have begged for mercy, but realizing how little it would avail, he made the sign of the cross and stretched himself out on the bench. Two policemen held him down, and the learned doctor stood by, ready in case of need to give his scientific assistance. The executioners having spat upon their hands, swung the rods, and the flogging began. The bench, it seemed, was too narrow, and it was found difficult to keep the writhing victim, whose muscles twitched convulsively, from falling off. Then the Governor ordered to be

¹ House of the rural communal government.

brought another bench, to which a plank was adjusted in such a way as to support it. The soldiers, ever ready with their continual salutes and responses of "Yes, your Excellency," swiftly and obediently executed the orders, while in the meantime the half-naked, pale, and suffering man, trembling, with contracted brows and downcast eyes, stood by waiting. When the bench was readjusted, he was again stretched out upon it, and the horse-stealers renewed their blows. His back, his legs, and even his sides were covered with bleeding wounds, and every blow was followed by the muffled groan which he could no longer repress. In the crowd that stood by one could hear the sobs of the wife and mother, the children, and the kinsfolk of the man, as well as of all who had been called to witness the punishment.

The wretched Governor, intoxicated with power, who had no doubt convinced himself of the necessity for this performance, counted the strokes on his fingers, while he smoked cigarette after cigarette, for the lighting of which several obliging persons hastened to offer him a burning match.

After fifty blows had been given, the peasant lay motionless, without uttering a sound, and the doctor, who had been educated in a government school that he might devote his scientific knowledge to the service of his country and his sovereign, approached the tortured man, felt his pulse, listened to the beating of his heart, and reported to the representative of authority that the victim had become unconscious, and declared that, from a scientific point of view, it might prove dangerous to prolong the punishment. But the unfortunate Governor, utterly intoxicated by the sight of blood, ordered the flogging to go on until seventy strokes had been given, the number which he for some reason deemed necessary. After the seventieth blow the Governor said:—

"That will do! Now bring on the next one!"

They raised the mutilated and unconscious man, with his swollen back, and carried him away, and the next was brought forward. The sobs and groans of the crowd increased, but the tortures were continued.

So it went on until each of the twelve men had received seventy strokes. They begged for mercy, they groaned and screamed. The sobs and moans of the women grew louder and more heartrending, and the faces of the men of the crowd more gloomy. But there stood the troops, and the torture did not cease until it had seemed sufficient to the unfortunate, half-intoxicated, erring man called the Governor.

Not only did the magistrates, the officers, and the soldiers sanction this act by their presence, but they took part in it, preventing the crowd from interfering with the order of its execution.

When I asked one of the chief officials why these tortures were inflicted after the men had already submitted, he replied, with the significant air of a man who understands all the fine points of political wisdom, that it was done because it had been proved by experience that if the peasants are not punished they will soon begin again to oppose the decrees of authority, and that the punishment of a few strengthens forever the power of authority.

And now I saw the Governor of Tula, with his clerks, officers, and soldiers, on his way to perform a similar act. Once more by murder or torture the sentence of the higher authorities was to be carried out, — a sentence whose object was to enable a young landowner, the possessor of a yearly income of 100,000 roubles, to receive 3000 more for a tract of wood of which he had basely defrauded a whole community of needy and starving peasants, the price of which he would squander in a few weeks in the restaurants of St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Paris. Such was the errand of the men I met.

It would seem as if there must be some purpose in this encounter, when, after two years of incessant contemplation, of continuous thought in one direction, fate should, for the first time in my life, bring me face to face with this phenomenon, a living illustration of the theory I have so long cherished; namely, that the entire organization of our life rests, not on any principle of justice, as men who occupy and enjoy advantageous positions

under the existing system like to imagine, but on the rudest and most barefaced violence, on the murder and torture of human beings.

Those who possess large estates and large capital, or who receive high salaries collected from the needy working-classes, from the people who often lack the necessaries of life ; merchants, clerks, doctors, lawyers, artists, scientists, writers, coachmen, cooks, and valets, who earn their living in the service of rich men, — fondly believe that the privileges which they enjoy are not the outcome of violence, but the natural result of a voluntary interchange of services ; that these privileges are by no means the result of the outrages and floggings endured by their fellow-men, such as took place last summer in Russia, in Orel and elsewhere, as the like took place in many parts of Europe and America. They prefer to believe that the privileges they enjoy are the spontaneous result of a mutual agreement among men ; that violence is only the natural result of certain universal and superior laws, judicial, political, or economic. They try not to see that the privileges they possess are only held by them in consequence of some circumstance, not unlike that which compelled the peasants, who had tended the growing forest and greatly needed it, to surrender it to the rich landowner, who had taken no pains to preserve it, and who did not require it for his own use ; men who will either be flogged or murdered if they refuse to surrender it. Now, if it is an undeniable fact that the mill in Orel was made to yield an increased income to the proprietor, and that the forest raised by the peasants was given to the landowner only because of the flogging and the executions either threatened or actually suffered, then it must be equally evident that all the other exclusive rights of the rich, which deprive the poor of the bare necessaries of life, rest on the same basis.

If the peasants who need land in order to support their families may not cultivate the land around them, and if land sufficient to feed a thousand families is in the hands of one man, a Russian, an Englishman, an Austrian, a rich landowner of whatever nationality ; and if the merchant who

buys grain from the needy grower keeps it in his warehouses in the midst of a destitute and famishing population, or sells it for three times its value to those of whom he bought it at the lowest price, — it evidently springs from the same cause.

And if, beyond a certain line called the frontier, one man is not allowed to purchase certain goods without paying duties to other men who have nothing to do with their production, and if a man is obliged to part with his last cow in order to pay taxes which are distributed by the government among its officials, or used for the support of soldiers who may kill the taxpayers, it would seem evident that all this is not the result of certain abstract rights, but of incidents like those which may even now be going on in the government of Tula, which in one form or another occur periodically all the world over, wherever state organization exists, and wherever there are rich and poor.

Owing to the fact that outrage and murder do not accompany all social relations founded on violence, those who possess the exclusive privileges of the governing classes assure themselves and others that the advantages which they enjoy are not the result of violence and bloodshed, but derived from certain vague and abstract rights. Still it ought to be evident that if those men, who realize the injustice of it all (as is the case with the working-classes at the present day), continue to surrender the greater part of their earnings to the capitalist and the landowner, and if they pay taxes, knowing that such taxes are not put to a good use, they do this, not because they acknowledge the justice of certain abstract rights, whose meaning is unknown to them, but only because they know that they will be whipped and put to death if they refuse to comply.

If it is not always necessary to imprison men, to flog them, or to put them to death when the landowner collects his rents, if the needy peasant pays a treble price to the merchant who deceives him, or the mechanic accepts wages absurdly small in comparison with the income of his master, or the poor man parts with his last rouble for

duties and taxes, it is because he remembers that men have been flogged and put to death for trying to avoid compliance with what was demanded of them. Like a caged tiger, who does not touch the meat that lies before his eyes, and who when he is ordered to leap over a stick obeys at once, not because he likes it, but because he has not forgotten past hunger or the red-hot iron which he felt every time he refused to obey; so it is with men, who, when they submit to a law which is not for their advantage, to a law which is disastrous to their interests, or to one which they firmly believe to be unjust, do so because they remember what they will have to suffer if they refuse to comply.

Those who benefit by privileges born of violence long since perpetrated, often forget, and are very glad to forget, how such privileges were obtained. And yet one has but to recall the annals of history, — not the history of the exploits of kings, but genuine history, — the history of the oppression of the majority by the minority, in order to acknowledge that the scourge, the prison, and the gallows have been the original and only sources whence all the advantages of the rich over the poor have sprung. One has but to remember the persistent and undying passion for gain among men, the mainspring of human action in these days, to become convinced that the advantages of the rich over the poor can be maintained in no other way.

At rare intervals, oppression, flogging, imprisonment, executions, the direct object of which is not to promote the welfare of the rich, may possibly occur, but we can positively declare that in our community, where for every man who lives at ease there are ten overworked, hungry, and often cruelly suffering families of working-men, all the privileges of the rich, all their luxury, all their superfluities, are acquired and maintained only by tortures, imprisonments, and executions.

The train that I met on the 9th day of September carrying soldiers, muskets, ammunition, and rods to the famine-stricken peasants, in order that the wealthy landowner might possess in peace the tract of wood

ne had wrested from the peasants, a necessity of life to them, to him a mere superfluity, affords a vivid proof of the degree to which men have unconsciously acquired the habit of committing acts wholly at variance with their convictions and their conscience.

The express consisted of one first-class carriage for the Governor, officials, and officers, and several vans crowded with soldiers. The jaunty young fellows in their fresh new uniforms were crowded together, either standing, or sitting with their legs dangling outside the wide open sliding doors of the vans. Some were smoking, laughing, and jesting, some cracking seeds and spitting out the shells. A few who jumped down upon the platform to get a drink of water from the tub, meeting some of the officers, slackened their pace and made that senseless gesture of lifting one hand to the forehead; then, with serious faces, as though they had been doing something not only sensible but actually important, they passed by, watching the officers as they went. Soon they broke into a run, evidently in high spirits, stamping on the planks of the platform as they ran, and chatting, as is but natural for good-natured, healthy young fellows who are making a journey together. These men, who were on their way to murder starving fathers and grandfathers, seemed as unconcerned as though they were off on the pleasantest, or at least the most everyday, business in the world.

The gaily dressed officers and officials who were scattered about on the platform and in the first-class waiting-room produced the same impression. At a table laden with bottles sat the Governor, the commander of the expedition, attired in his semi-military uniform, eating his luncheon and quietly discussing the weather with some friends he had met, as though the business that called him hither was so simple a matter that it could neither ruffle his equanimity nor diminish his interest in the change of the weather.

At some distance, but tasting no food, sat the chief of the police with a mournful countenance, seemingly oppressed with the tiresome formalities. Officers in gaudy,

gold-embroidered uniforms moved to and fro, talking loudly; one group was seated at a table just finishing a bottle of wine; an officer at the bar who had eaten a cake brushed away the crumbs that had fallen on his uniform, and with a self-sufficient air flung a coin upon the counter; some walked nonchalantly up and down in front of our train looking at the faces of the women.

All these men on their way to commit murder, or to torture the starved and defenseless peasants, by whose toil they were supported, looked as if engaged upon some important business which they were really proud to execute.

What did it mean?

These men, who were within half an hour's ride of the spot where, in order to procure for a rich man an extra 3000 roubles, of which he had no need whatever, which he was unjustly confiscating from a community of famished peasants, might be obliged to perform the most shocking deeds that the imagination can conceive,—to murder and torture, as they did in Orel, innocent men, their brothers. These men were now calmly approaching the time and place when these horrors were to begin.

Since the preparations had been made, it could not very well be claimed that all these men, officers and privates, did not know what was before them, and what they were expected to do. The Governor had given orders for the rods, the officials had purchased the birch twigs, bargained for them, and noted the purchase in their accounts. In the military department orders had been given and received concerning ball cartridges. They all knew that they were on their way to torture and possibly to put to death their brothers exhausted by famine, and that perhaps in an hour they might begin the work.

To say, as they themselves would say, that they are acting from principle, from a conviction that the state system must be maintained, is untrue. Those men, in the first place, have rarely, if ever, bestowed a single thought upon political science; and in the second place,

because they could never be convinced that the business on which they are engaged serves to support rather than destroy the State; and finally, because, as a matter of fact, the majority of these men, if not all of them, would not only be unwilling to sacrifice their peace and comfort to maintain the State, but would never miss the opportunity to promote their own interests at the expense of the State,—therefore it is not for the sake of so vague a principle as that of maintaining the State that they do this.

What, then, does all this mean?

I know these men. I may not know them as individuals, it is true, yet I know their dispositions, their past lives, their modes of thought. They have had mothers, some have wives and children. Actually, they are, for the most part, kindly, gentle, tender-hearted men, who abhor any kind of cruelty, to say nothing of killing or torturing; moreover, every one of them professes Christianity, and considers violence perpetrated against the defenseless a contemptible and shameful act. Each taken individually, in everyday life, is not only incapable, for the sake of personal advantage, of doing one-hundredth part of what was done by the Governor at Orel, but any one of them would consider himself insulted if it were suggested that he could be capable of doing anything like it in private life. And yet they are within a half-hour's ride of the spot where they will inevitably find themselves compelled to do such deeds.

What can it mean, then?

It is not only the men on this train who are ready to commit murder and violence, but those others with whom the affair originated, the landowner, the steward, the judge, those in St. Petersburg who issue orders,—the Minister of State, the Czar, also worthy men and professors of Christianity,—how can they, knowing the consequences, conceive such a scheme, and direct its execution?

How can they, even, who take no active part in it,—the spectators, whose indignation would be aroused by

accounts of private violence, even though it be but the ill-usage of a horse, — how can they allow this shocking business to go on without rising in wrath to resist it, crying aloud, “No, we will not allow you to flog or to kill starving men because they refuse to surrender their last property villainously attempted to be wrested from them!” And not only are men found willing to do these deeds, but most of them, even the chief instigators, like the steward, the landowner, the judge, and those who take part in originating prosecution and punishment, the Governor, the Minister of State, the Czar, remain perfectly calm, and show no sign of remorse over such things. And they who are about to execute this crime are equally calm.

Even the spectators, who, it would seem, have no personal interest in the matter, look upon these men who are about to take part in this dastardly business with sympathy rather than with aversion or condemnation.

In the same compartment with me sat a merchant who dealt in timber, a peasant by birth, who in loud and decided tones expressed his approval of the outrage which the peasants were about to suffer. “The government must be obeyed; that’s what it’s for. If we pepper them well, they will never rebel again. It’s no more than they deserve!” he said.

What did it all mean?

It could not be said that all these men, the instigators, the participants, the accomplices in this business, were rascals, who, in defiance of conscience, realizing the utter abomination of the act, were, either from mercenary motives or from fear of punishment, determined to commit it. Any man of them would, given the requisite circumstances, stand up for his convictions. Not one of those officials would steal a purse, or read another man’s letter, or endure an insult without demanding satisfaction from the offender. Not one of those officers would cheat at cards, or neglect to pay a gambling debt, or betray a companion, or flee from the battlefield, or abandon a flag. Not one of those soldiers would dare to reject the sacrament, or even taste meat on Good Friday. Each of

these men would choose to endure any kind of privation, suffering, or danger, rather than consent to do a deed which he considered wrong. Hence it is evident that they are able to resist whatever is contrary to their convictions.

Still less true would it be to pronounce these men brutes, to whom such deeds are congenial rather than repulsive. One needs but to talk with them to become convinced that all, — landowner, judge, minister, governor, Czar, officers, and soldiers, — at the bottom of their hearts not only disapprove of such deeds, but when a sense of their true significance is borne in upon them, really suffer at being forced to take part in these scenes. They can only try not to think of them.

One needs but to speak to those who are actors in this business, beginning with the landowner and ending with the lowest policeman or soldier, to discover that at the bottom of their hearts they all acknowledge the wickedness of the deed, and know that it would be better to abstain from it; and this knowledge makes them suffer.

A lady of liberal views in our train, seeing the Governor and the officers in the first-class waiting-room, and learning the object of their journey, began to talk in an ostensibly loud tone, in order that they might hear what she said, condemning the present laws and crying shame upon the men who took part in this business. This made everybody feel uncomfortable. The men knew not where to look, yet no one ventured to argue the point. The passengers pretended that remarks so senseless deserved no reply, but it was evident by the expression of their faces and their wandering eyes that they felt ashamed. I noticed the same in regard to the soldiers. They knew well enough that they were going about an evil business, and they preferred not to think of what was before them. When the timber merchant, insincerely, in my opinion, and simply by way of showing his superior knowledge, began to speak of the necessity of these measures, the soldiers who heard him turned away frowning, and pretended not to listen to him.

The landowner, his steward, the minister, the Czar, all

who are parties to this business, those who were traveling by this train, even those who, taking no part in the affair, were but lookers-on, all really know it to be wicked. Why, then, do they do these things, why do they repeat them, why do they permit them to be?

Ask the landowner who started the affair; the judge who rendered a decision legal in form, but absolutely unjust; and those who, like the soldiers and the peasants, will, with their own hands, execute this work of beating and murdering their brothers, — all of them, instigators, administrators, and executioners, will make essentially the same reply.

The officials will say that the present system requires to be supported in this manner, and it is for this reason that they do these things, because the good of the country, the welfare of mankind in general, of social life and civilization, demand it.

The soldiers, men of the lower classes, who are forced to execute this violence with their own hands, will answer that the higher authorities, who are supposed to know their business, have commanded it, and that it is for them to obey. It never occurs to them to question the capacity of those who represent the higher authorities. If the possibility of error is ever admitted, it is only in the case of some subordinate authority; the higher power whence all things emanate is supposed to be absolutely infallible.

Thus, while attributing their actions to various motives, both principals and subordinates agree that the existing order is the one best suited to the present time, and that it is the sacred duty of every man to maintain it.

This assurance of the necessity and immutability of the existing order is continually advanced by all participants in violence committed by the State, and that, as the existing order never can be changed, the refusal of a single individual to perform the duties imposed on him will make no difference as far as the fundamental principle is concerned, and will only result in the substitution of another who may be more cruel and do more harm.

This belief that the existing order is immutable, and

that it is the sacred duty of every man to lend it support, encourages every man of good moral character to take part, with a conscience more or less clear, in such affairs as that which occurred in Orel, and the one in which those in the train for Tula were going to take part.

On what, then, is this belief founded?

It is but natural that it should seem pleasant and desirable to a landowner to believe that the existing order is indispensable and immutable, because it secures to him the income from his hundreds and thousands of *dessiatins* by which his idle and luxurious existence is maintained.

It is also natural that the judge should willingly admit the necessity of a system through which he receives fifty times more than the most hard-working laboring man. And the same may be said in regard to the other higher functionaries. It is only while the present system endures that he, as governor, procureur, senator, or member of the council, can receive his salary of several thousands, without which he and his family would certainly perish; for outside the place which he fills, more or less well according to his abilities and diligence, he could command only a fraction of what he receives. The ministers, the head of the State, and every person in high authority are all alike in this, save that the higher their rank, the more exclusive their position, the more important it becomes that they should believe no order possible, except that which now exists; for were it overthrown, not only would they find it impossible to gain similar positions, but they would fall lower in the scale than other men. The man who voluntarily hires himself out as a policeman for ten roubles a month, a sum which he could easily earn in any other position, has but little interest in the preservation of the existing system, and therefore may or may not believe in its immutability.

But the king or emperor, who receives his millions, who knows that around him there are thousands of men envious to take his place, who knows that from no other quarter could he draw such an income or receive such homage, that, if overthrown, he might be judged for

abuse of power, — there is neither king nor emperor who can help believing in the immutability and sanctity of the existing order. The higher the position in which a man is placed, the more unstable it is; and the more perilous and frightful the possible downfall, the more firmly will he believe in the immutability of the existing order; and he is able to do wicked and cruel deeds with a perfectly peaceful conscience, because he persuades himself that they are done, not for his own benefit, but for the support of the existing order.

And so it is with every individual in authority, from obscure policemen to the man who occupies the most exalted rank, — the positions they occupy being more advantageous than those which they might be capable of filling if the present system did not exist. All these men believe more or less in its immutability, because it is advantageous to them.

But what influences the peasants, the soldiers, who stand on the lowest rung of the ladder and who derive no advantage from the existing system, who are in the most enslaved and degraded condition; what induces them to believe that the existing order, which serves to keep them in this inferior position, is the best, and one which should be maintained; and why are they willing, in order to promote this end, to violate their consciences by committing wicked deeds?

What urges them to the false conclusion that the existing order is immutable and ought therefore to be maintained, when the fact is that its immutability is due only to their own effort to maintain it?

Why do those men, taken from the plow, whom we see masquerading in ugly, objectionable uniforms, with blue collars and gold buttons, go about armed with muskets and sabers to kill their famishing fathers and brothers? They derive no advantage from their present position; they would be no losers were they deprived of it, since it is worse than the one from which they were taken.

Those in authority belonging to the higher classes, the landowners and merchants, the judges, senators,

governors, ministers, and kings, the officials in general, participate in such actions and maintain the present system, because such a system is for their interest. Often enough they are kind-hearted and gentle men. They play no personal part in these acts ; all they do is to institute inquiries, pronounce judgments, and issue commands. Those in authority do not themselves execute the deeds which they have devised and ordered. They but rarely see in what manner these dreadful deeds are executed. But the unfortunate members of the lower classes, who receive no benefit from the existing system, who, on the other hand, find themselves greatly despised because of the duties which they perform in order that a system which is opposed to their own interests may be maintained, — they who tear men from the bosom of their families to send them to the galleys, who bind and imprison them, who stand on guard over them, who shoot them, why do they do this ? What is it that compels these men to believe that the existing order is immutable, and that it is their duty to maintain it ? Violence exists only because there are those who with their own hands maltreat, bind, imprison, and murder. If there were no policemen, or soldiers, or armed men of any sort ready when bidden to use violence and to put men to death, not one of those who sign death-warrants, or sentence for imprisonment for life or hard labor in the galleys, would ever have sufficient courage himself to hang, imprison, or torture one thousandth part of those whom now, sitting in their studies, these men calmly order to be hung or tortured, because they do not see it done, they do not do it themselves. Their servants do it for them in some far-away corner.

All these deeds of injustice and cruelty have become an integral part of the existing system of life, only because there are men ever ready to execute them. If there were no such men, the multitude of human beings who are now the victims of violence would be spared, and furthermore, the magistrates would never dare to issue, nor even dream of issuing, those commands which they now send forth with such assurance. If there were no

men to obey the will of others and to execute commands to torture and murder, no one would ever dare to defend the declaration so confidently made by landowners and men of leisure; namely, that the land lying on all sides of the unfortunate peasants, who are perishing for the want of it, is the property of the man who does not till it, and that reserves of grain, fraudulently obtained, are to be held intact amidst a famine-stricken and dying population, because the merchant must have his profit. If there were no men ready at the bidding of the authorities to torture and murder, the landowner would never dream of seizing a forest which had been tended by the peasants; nor would officials consider themselves entitled to salaries paid to them from money wrung from the famished people whom they oppress, or which they derive for the prosecution, imprisonment, and exile of men who denounce falsehood and preach the truth.

All this is done because those in authority well know that they have always at hand submissive agents ready to obey their commands to outrage and to murder.

It is to this crowd of submissive slaves, ready to obey all orders, that we owe the deeds of the whole series of tyrants, from Napoleon to the obscure captain who bids his men fire upon the people. It is through the agency of policemen and soldiers (especially the latter, since the former can act only when supported by military force) that these deeds of violence are committed. What, then, has induced those who are by no means benefited by doing with their hands these dreadful deeds, — what is it that has led these kindly men into an error so gross that they actually believe that the present system, which is so distressing, so baleful, so fatal, is the one best suited to the times? Who has led them into this extraordinary aberration?

They can never have persuaded themselves that a course which is not only painful and opposed to their interests, but which is fatal to their class, which forms nine-tenths of the entire population, one which, too, is opposed to their conscience, is right. "What reason can you give for killing men, when God's commandment says, 'Thou

shalt not kill ' ? ” is a question I have often put to different soldiers. And it always embarrassed them to have a question put which recalled what they would rather not remember.

They knew that the divine law forbade murder, — *thou shalt not kill*, — and they had always known of this compulsory military duty, but had never thought of one as contradictory to the other. The hesitating replies to my question were usually to the effect that the act of killing a man in war and the execution of criminals by order of the government were not included in the general prohibition against murder. But when I rejoined that no such limitation existed in the law of God, and cited the Christian doctrine of brotherhood, the forgiveness of injuries, the injunction to love one's neighbor, all of which precepts are quite contrary to murder, the men of the lower class would usually agree with me and ask, “How then can it be that the government (which they believe cannot err) sends troops to war and orders the execution of criminals ? ” When I replied that this was a mistake on the part of the government, my interlocutors became still more uncomfortable, and either dropped the conversation or showed annoyance.

“Probably there is a law for it. I should think the bishops know more than you do,” a Russian soldier once said to me. And he evidently felt relieved, confident that his superiors had found a law, one that had authorized his ancestors and their successors, millions of men like himself, to serve the State, and that the question I had asked is in the nature of a conundrum.

Every man in Christendom has undoubtedly been taught by tradition, by revelation, and by the voice of conscience, which can never be gainsaid, that murder is one of the most heinous crimes men can commit ; it is thus affirmed in the gospel, and they know that this sin of murder is not altered by conditions — that is to say, if it is sinful to kill one man, it is sinful to kill another. Any man knows that, if murder be a sin, it is not changed by the character or position of the man against whom it is committed, which is the case also with

adultery, theft, and all other sins, and yet men are accustomed from childhood to see murder, not only acknowledged, but blessed by those whom they are taught to regard as their spiritual directors appointed by Christ, and to know that their temporal leaders, with calm assurance, countenance the custom of murder, and summon all men, in the name of the law and even the name of God, to its participation. Men perceive the existence of an inconsistency, but finding themselves unable to discern its cause, they naturally attribute the idea to their own ignorance. The obviousness and crudity of the contradiction confirms them in this belief. They cannot imagine that their superiors and teachers, even the scientists, could advocate with so much assurance two principles so utterly at variance as the command to follow the law of Christ, and the requirement to commit murder. No pure-minded, innocent child, no youth, could imagine that men who stand so high in his esteem, whom he looks upon with such reverence, could for any purpose deceive him so unscrupulously.

And yet it is this very deception which is constantly practised. In the first place, to all working-men, who have personally no time to analyze moral and religious problems, it is taught from childhood, by example and precept, that tortures and murders are compatible with Christianity, and in certain cases they should not only be permitted, but must be employed; in the second place, to certain among them, engaged in the army either through conscription or voluntarily, it is conveyed that the accomplishment with their own hands of torture or homicide is not only their sacred duty, but a glorious exploit, meriting praise and recompense.

This universal deception is propagated by all catechisms or their substitutes, those books which at the present time teachers are compelled to use in the instruction of the young. It is taught that violence, — outrage, imprisonment, execution, — the murder that takes place in civil or in foreign war, has for its object the maintenance and security of the political organization, — whether this be an absolute or a constitutional mon-

archy, consulate, republic, or commune, — that it is perfectly legitimate, and that it is in contradiction neither to morality nor Christianity.

And men are so firmly convinced of this that they grow up, live, and die in the belief, never for a moment doubting it.

So much for this universal deception. And now for another, which is special, and practised upon soldiers and police, the instruments by whose agency outrages and murders, necessary for the support and maintenance of the existing order, are accomplished.

The military rules and regulations of every country are practically the same as those formulated in the Russian military code.

“87. To fulfil exactly, and without comment, the orders of the superior officers, means—to execute orders with precision, without considering whether they are good or bad, or whether their execution be possible. Only the superior is responsible for the consequences of his order.

“88. The only occasion on which the inferior should not obey the order of his superior is when he sees plainly that in obeying it” (Here one naturally thinks it will surely go on to say when he plainly sees that in fulfilling the order of his superior he violates the law of God. Not at all; it goes on to say:) “*sees plainly that he violates the oath of allegiance and duty to his sovereign.*”

It is stated in the code that a man, in becoming a soldier, can and must execute *all* the orders, without exception, which he receives from his superior; orders which, for a soldier, are for the most part connected with murder. He may violate every law, human and divine, as long as he does not violate his oath of allegiance to him who, at a given time, happens to be in power.

Thus it stands in the Russian military code, and this is the substance of the military codes of other nations. It could not be otherwise. The foundations of the power of the State rest upon the delusion by means of

which men are set free from their obligations to God and to their own consciences, and bound to obey the will of a casual superior.

This is the basis of the appalling conviction that prevails among the lower classes, that the existing system, so ruinous to them, is necessary and justifiable, and that it must be maintained by outrage and murder.

This is inevitable. In order to force the lower, the more numerous classes to act as their own oppressors and tormentors, to commit deeds contrary to their consciences, it is necessary to deceive them.

And this is done.

Not long since I saw again put into practice this shameful deception, and again wondered to see it effected without opposition and so audaciously.

In the beginning of November, on my way through Tula, I saw at the gates of the *Zemskaya Uprava* the familiar dense crowd of men and women, from which issued the sounds of drunken voices, blended with the heartrending sobs of the wives and mothers.

The military conscription was in progress.

As usual, I could not pass by without pausing; the sight attracts me as by fascination.

Again I mingled with the crowd, and stood looking on, questioning, and marveling at the facility with which this most terrible of all offenses is committed in broad daylight, and in the midst of a large city.

On the first day of November, in every village in Russia, with its population of one hundred millions, the *starostas*,¹ according to custom, take the men whose names are entered on the rolls, frequently their own sons, and carry them to town.

On the way the men drink freely, unchecked by the elder men; they realize that entering upon this insane business of leaving their wives and mothers, giving up everything that is sacred to them, only to become the senseless tools of murder, is too painful if one's senses are not stupefied with wine.

And thus they journey on, carousing, brawling, sing-

¹ Elders.

ing, and fighting. The night is spent in a tavern, and on this morning, having drunk still more, they assemble before the house of the *Uprava*.

Some in new sheepskin coats, with knit mufflers wound round their necks, some with their eyes swollen with drinking, some noisy and boisterous, by way of stimulating their courage, others silent and woebegone, they were gathered near the gates, surrounded by their wives and mothers with tear-stained faces, awaiting their turn (I happened to be there on the day when the recruits were received, that is to say, the day on which they were examined), while others were crowding the entry of the office.

Meanwhile they are hurrying on the work within. A door opens and the guard calls for Piotr Sidorov. Piotr Sidorov makes the sign of the cross, looks around with a startled gaze, and opening a glass door, he enters the small room where the recruits take off their clothes. The man before him, his friend, who has just been enrolled, has but this moment stepped out of the office stark naked, and with chattering teeth hastens to put on his clothes. Piotr Sidorov has heard, and can plainly see by the look on his face, that the man has been enlisted. He longs to question him, but he is ordered to undress as quickly as possible. He pulls off his sheepskin coat, drops his waistcoat and his shirt, and with prominent ribs, trembling and reeking with the odors of liquor, tobacco, and sweat, steps barefooted into the office, wondering what he shall do with his large sinewy hands.

A portrait of the Emperor in uniform, with a ribbon across his breast, in a large golden frame, hangs in a conspicuous place, while a small ikon of Christ, clad in a loose garment, with the crown of thorns on his head, hangs in one corner. In the middle of the room is a table covered with a green cloth on which papers are lying, and on which stands a small three-cornered object surmounted by an eagle and called the mirror of justice. Around the table the officials sit tranquilly. One smokes, another turns over the papers. As soon as Sidorov enters a guard comes up and measures him.

His chin is raised and his feet are adjusted. Then a man who is smoking a cigarette — the doctor — approaches him, and without glancing at his face, but gazing in another direction, touches his body with an expression of disgust, measures him, orders the guard to open his mouth, tells him to breathe, and then proceeds to dictate to another man who takes down the minutes. Finally, and still without even one glance at his face, the doctor says: "He will do! The next!" and with a wearied air he seats himself at the table. Once more the guard hustles him about, bidding him to make haste. Somehow or other he pulls on his shirt, fumbling for the sleeves, hastily gets on his trousers, wraps his feet in the rags he uses for stockings, pulls on his boots, hunts for his muffler and cap, tucks his sheepskin coat under his arm, and is escorted to that part of the hall which is fenced off by a bench, where the recruits who have been admitted are placed. A young countryman like himself, but from another, far-away government, who is a soldier already, with a musket to which a bayonet is attached, guards him, ready to run him through the body if he should attempt to escape.

Meanwhile the crowd of fathers, mothers, and wives, hustled by policemen, presses around the gates, trying to find out who has been taken and who rejected. A man who has been rejected comes out and tells them that Piotr has been admitted; then is heard the cry of Piotr's young wife, for whom this word means a four or five years' separation, and the dissolute life such as a soldier's wife in domestic service is.

But here comes a man with flowing hair and dressed differently from the others, who has just arrived; he descends from his droschky and goes toward the house of the *Zemskaya Uprava*, while the policemen clear a way for him through the crowd.

"The Father has arrived to swear them in." And this "Father," who has always been accustomed to believe himself a special and privileged servant of Christ, and who is usually quite unconscious of his false

position, enters the room where the recruits who have been admitted are waiting for him; he puts on, as a vestment, a sort of brocade curtain, disengages from it his flowing hair, opens the Bible wherein an oath is forbidden, lifts the cross, that cross on which Christ was crucified for refusing to do what this person, his supposed servant, commands men to do, and all these defenseless and deluded young men repeat after him the lie so familiar to his lips, which he utters with such assurance. He reads while they repeat: "I promise and swear to the Lord Almighty, upon His holy Bible," etc. to defend (that is, to murder all those whom I shall be ordered to murder) and to do whatever those men, strangers to me, who regard me only as a necessary tool to be used in perpetrating the outrages by which they oppress my brethren and preserve their own positions, command me to do. All the recruits having stupidly repeated the words, the so-called Father departs, quite sure that he has performed his duty in the most accurate and conscientious manner, while the young men deluded by him really believe that by the absurd, and to them almost unintelligible, words which they have just uttered, they are released during their term of service from all obligations to their fellow-men, and are bound by new and more imperative ties to the duties of a soldier.

And this is done publicly, but not a man comes forward to say to the deceived and the deceivers, "Come to your senses and go your way; this is all a base and treacherous lie; it imperils not only your bodies, but your souls."

No one does this. On the contrary, as if in derision, after they have all been enrolled and are about to depart, the colonel enters the hall where these poor, drunken, and deluded creatures are locked in, and with a solemn air, calls out to them in military fashion: "Good day, men! I congratulate you upon entering *the Czar's service*." And they, poor fellows, mumble in their semi-drunken way, a reply which has already been taught them, to the effect that it fills their hearts with joy.

The expectant crowd of fathers, mothers, and wives is still standing at the gates. Women, with tear-worn, wide-open eyes, watch the door. Suddenly it opens and the men come rolling out, assuming an air of bravado, the Petruhas, Vanuhas, and Makars, now enrolled, trying to avoid the eyes of their relatives, pretending not to see them. At once break out the sobs and cries of the wives and mothers. Some of the men clasp them in their arms, weeping, some put on a devil-may-care look, others make an attempt to console them. The wives, the mothers, realizing that they are now abandoned, without support, for three or four years, cry and wail bitterly. The fathers say little; they only sigh and make a clicking sound with their tongues that indicates their grief; they know that they are about to lose that help which they have reared and trained their sons to render; that when their sons return they will no longer be sober and industrious laborers, but soldiers, weaned from their former life of simplicity, grown dissolute, and vain of their uniforms.

Now the whole crowd has departed, driving down the street in sleighs to the taverns and inns, and louder grows the chorus of mingled sobs, songs, and drunken cries, the moaning and muttering of the wives and mothers, the sounds of the accordion, the noise of altercations.

All repair to the eating-houses and taverns, from the traffic of which part of the revenue of the government is derived, and there they give themselves up to drink, stupefying their senses so that they care nothing for the injustice done to them.

Then they spend several weeks at home, drinking nearly all the time.

When the day arrives, they are driven like cattle to the appointed place, where they are drilled in military exercises by those who a few years ago, like themselves, were deceived and brutalized. During the instructions the means employed are lying, blows, and *vodka*. And before the year is over the good, kindly, and intelligent fellows will have become as brutal as their teachers.

"Suppose your father were arrested and attempted escape," I once suggested to a young soldier, "what would you do?"

"It would be my duty to thrust my bayonet through his body," he replied, in the peculiar, meaningless monotone of the soldier. "And if he ran I should shoot," he added, taking pride apparently in thinking what he should do if his father attempted to run.

When a good young fellow is reduced to a condition lower than that of the brute, he is ready for those who wish to use him as an instrument of violence. He is ready. The man is lost, and a new instrument of violence has been created. And all this goes on throughout Russia in the autumn of every year, in broad daylight, in the heart of a great city, witnessed by all the inhabitants, and the stratagem is so skilfully managed, that though men at the bottom of their hearts realize its infamy, still they have not the power to throw off the yoke.

After our eyes are once opened, and we view this frightful delusion in its true light, it is astonishing that preachers of Christianity and morality, teachers of youth, or even those kindly and sensible parents who are to be found in every community, can advocate any principles of morality whatever in the midst of a society where torture and murder are openly recognized as constituting indispensable conditions in human life, — openly acknowledged by all churches and governments, — where certain men among us must be always ready to murder their brethren, and where any of us may have to do the same.

Not to speak of Christian doctrine, how are children, how are youths, how are any to be taught morality, while the principle that murder is required in order to maintain the general welfare is taught; when men are made to believe that murder is lawful, that some men, and any of us may be among them, must kill and torture their neighbors, and commit every kind of crime at the command of those in authority? If this principle is right, then there is not, nor can there be, any doctrine

of morality; might is right, and there is no other law. This principle, which some seek to justify on the hypothesis of the struggle for existence, in fact dominates society.

What kind of moral doctrine can that be which permits murder for any object whatsoever? It is as impossible as a mathematical problem which would affirm that $2 = 3$. It may be admitted that $2 = 3$ looks like mathematics, but it is not mathematics at all. Every code of morals must be founded first of all upon the acknowledgment that human life is to be held sacred.

The doctrine of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life, has been revoked by Christianity because that doctrine was but the justification of immorality, a semblance of justice, but without meaning. Life is a substance which can neither be weighed, measured, nor compared; hence the taking of one life for another has no sense. Moreover, the aim of every social law is amelioration of human life. How, then, can the destruction of certain lives improve the condition of other lives? The destruction of life is not an act that tends to improve it; it is suicide.

To destroy human life, and call it justice, may be likened to the act of a man who, having lost one arm, cuts off the other, by way of making matters even.

Not to speak of the deceit of presenting the most shocking crimes in the light of a duty, of the shocking abuse of using Christ's name and authority in order to confirm acts which he condemned, how can men, looking at the matter from the standpoint merely of personal safety, suffer the existence of the shocking, senseless, cruel, and dangerous force which every organized government, supported by the army, represents?

The most violent and rapacious band of robbers is less to be feared than such an organization. Even the authority of the leader of a band of robbers is more or less limited by the will of each individual member of the band, who, retaining a certain degree of independence, has the right to oppose acts with which he does not agree. But the authority of men who form part of

an organized government, maintained by the army with its present system of discipline, is unlimited. When their master, be he Boulanger, Pugatchov, or Napoleon, issues his commands, there is no crime too hideous for those who form part of the government and the army to commit.

It must often occur to one who sees conscriptions, drills, and military manœuvres taking place, who sees police going about with loaded revolvers, sentinels armed with bayonets, — to one who hears from morning till night, as I do (in the district of Hamovniki,¹ where I live), the whirring balls and the concussion as they strike the target, — to ask why these things are tolerated. And when one sees in the same city, where every attempt at violence is at once suppressed, where even the sale of powder or medicines is prohibited, where a doctor is not allowed to practice without a diploma, thousands of disciplined men, controlled by one individual, being trained for murder, one cannot help asking how men who have any regard for their own safety can calmly endure such a condition of affairs, and allow it to continue? Leaving aside the question of the immorality and pernicious influence of it, what could be more dangerous? What are they thinking of, — I speak not now of Christians, Christian pastors, philanthropists, or moralists, but simply those who value their lives, their safety, their welfare? Granting that power is at present in the hands of a moderate ruler, it may fall to-morrow into those of a Biron, an Elizabeth, a Catharine, a Pugatchov, a Napoleon. And even though the ruler be moderate to-day, he may become a mere savage to-morrow; he may be succeeded by an insane or half-insane heir, like the King of Bavaria or the Emperor Paul.

It is not only those who fill the highest offices, but all the lesser authorities scattered over the land — the chiefs of police, the commanders of companies, even the *stano-voys*² — may commit shocking crimes before they can be dismissed; it is an everyday occurrence.

¹ In Moscow.

² Chiefs of rural police.

Involuntarily one asks: How can men allow these things to go on? How can they tolerate them with any regard to their own personal safety?

It may be replied that some men do oppose it. (Those who are deluded and live in subjection have nothing either to tolerate or interdict.) Those who favor the continuance of the present system are only those who derive some special advantage from it. They favor it, and even with the disadvantages of having an insane or tyrannical man at the head of the government and the army, the position is less disadvantageous to them than if the present organization were abolished.

Whether his position be held under a Boulanger, a Republic, a Pugatchov, or a Catharine, — the judge, the police commissioner, the governor, the officer, will remain in it. But if the system which assures their positions were overthrown, they would lose them. Therefore it is a matter of indifference to these men whether one man or another be at the head of the organization of violence. What they do fear is its abolition; so they support it.

One wonders why men of independent means, who are not obliged to become soldiers, the so-called *élite* of society, enter military service in Russia, in England, in Germany, in Austria, and even in France, and desire the chance of killing? Why do parents, why do moral men, send their children to military schools? Why do mothers buy them such toys as helmets, swords, and muskets? (No child of a peasant ever plays at being a soldier.) Why do kindly men and women, who can have no manner of interest in war, go into ecstasies over the exploits of a man like Skobelev? Why do men who are under no obligation to do it, and who receive no pay for it, like Marshals of Nobility in Russia, devote months to the service which demands such unremitting labor, wearying to the minds as well as to the body, — the enlistment of recruits? Why do all emperors and kings wear a military dress, why do they have drills and parades and military rewards? Why are monuments built to generals and conquerors? Why

do wealthy and independent men regard it as an honor to occupy the position of lackeys to kings, to flatter them and feign a belief in their special superiority? Why do men who have long since ceased to believe in the medieval superstitions of the Church still constantly and solemnly pretend to do so, and thus support a sacrilegious and demoralizing institution? Why is the ignorance of the people so zealously preserved, not only by the government, but by men of the higher classes? Why do they so energetically denounce every attempt to overthrow popular superstition and to promote popular education? Why do historians, novelists, and poets, who can derive no benefit in exchange for their flattery, paint in such glowing colors the emperors, kings, and generals of bygone times? Why do the so-called scientists devote their lives to formulate theories that violence committed on the people by power is legitimate violence — is right?

One often wonders why an artist or a woman of the world, neither of whom, it would seem, ordinarily take much interest in sociological or military questions — why should they condemn strikes among workmen, or advocate war with such partizan zeal?

But one ceases to feel surprise when one realizes that the members of the higher classes possess the keenest insight, an intuitive perception, as it were, concerning those conditions which are friendly and those which are hostile to the organization upon whose existence their privileges depend.

It is true that the woman of society does not deliberately argue thus: "Were there no capitalists, or armies to defend them, my husband would have no money, and I should have neither *salon* nor fashionable gowns;" nor does the artist tell himself, in so many words, that if his pictures are to be sold there must be capitalists, defended by armies, to buy them; yet instinct, here doing duty for reason, is their surest guide. This instinct guides, with rare exceptions, all men who support those political, religious, and economic institutions which are advantageous to themselves.

But is it possible that men who belong to the higher classes defend this organization only because it is for their own advantage? They surely cannot fail to see that as an organization it is irrational, incompatible with the present consciousness of men, with public opinion, and that it is fraught with danger. Good, intelligent, honest men who belong to the ruling class cannot but suffer from such contradictions, nor can they close their eyes to the dangers that menace them.

And is it possible that the millions of men of the lower classes can go on calmly committing deeds which are so manifestly criminal, such as are the murders and tortures which they commit, simply from fear of punishment? Surely these things could not exist were not the falsehood and brutality of their actions hidden from all classes of men by the system of the political organization.

When such deeds are committed, there are so many instigators, participants, and abettors that no single individual feels himself morally responsible.

Assassins compel all the witnesses of an assassination to strike the body of the victim, with the intention of dividing the responsibility among the greatest number possible. And whenever those crimes by the aid of which the state system is maintained are to be committed, this same thing is observed. The rulers of State always endeavor to involve the greatest possible number of citizens in the participation of the crimes which it is to their interest to have committed.

In these latter days this is made especially evident by the drawing of citizens on the jury in courts of law, by drafting them into the army as soldiers, and into the communal or legislative administration as electors or elected.

As in a wicker basket all the ends are so carefully interwoven that they cannot be seen, so is it with the responsibility for crime. Individual responsibilities are so manipulated that no man perceives precisely what he is incurring.

In olden times tyrants were responsible for the crimes which were committed, but in the present age

the most frightful crimes are perpetrated, such as would hardly have been possible in the time of Nero, and still no one is held responsible.

Some demand the crime, some propose it, some determine it, some confirm it, some order it, some execute it.

Women and old men are hung, are flogged to death—even quite innocent people, as was recently the case with us in Russia, in the affair of the factory at Uzova; or, as is done all over in Europe and America, in the struggle with anarchists and other revolutionists, hundreds, thousands of men are shot, are killed; or, as happens in time of war, millions of men are massacred; or, as is happening always, the souls of men are destroyed by solitary confinement, by the debauchery of barrack life—and no one is responsible.

On the lower scale of the social ladder are posted soldiers armed with muskets, pistols, swords; they go about doing violence and killing, and through their doing so force other men to become soldiers like themselves, and yet they never dream that the responsibility rests on their shoulders; they shift it on to their superiors, who give the orders.

The czars, the presidents, the ministers of State, the general assemblies, order tortures, murders, conscriptions, and as they enjoy the absolute assurance that they rule by the grace of God or by the will of the society they govern, and that that society demands from them what they order, they cannot regard themselves as responsible.

Between these two classes we find a number of intermediaries, who take charge of the executions, tortures, conscriptions, and they, too, wash their hands of all responsibility, alleging on the one hand the orders of their superiors, and on the other that it is for such as themselves, who stand lower on the social ladder, to do these things.

The power that demands and the power that fulfils commands, the two extremes of governmental organ-

ization, unite like the two ends of a chain, each depending on and supporting the other, and all the intervening links.

Were it not for the conviction that there are men who assume the whole responsibility of such deeds, no soldier would lift his hand to torture or murder his fellow-man. Were it not for the conviction that the nation demands it, no king, emperor, president, or assembly would venture to issue commands for murder and torture. Were it not that he believes that there are men above him who assume the responsibility of his actions, and others below him whose welfare requires this treatment, no man of the intermediate class would ever perform the functions committed to him.

The organization of the State is such that on whatever position of the social ladder a man may stand, his irresponsibility remains intact. The higher he stands, the more liable he is to feel the pressure brought to bear on him from below, urging him to issue commands, and the less likely he will be to be influenced by orders from above, and *vice versa*.

But it is not enough that all men bound by the organization of the State transfer their responsibility from one to the other, — the peasant, for instance, who becomes a soldier to the merchant who has become an officer; the officer to the noble who occupies the position of governor; the governor to the minister of State; the minister to the sovereign; and the sovereign who in his turn shifts the responsibility upon all, — officials, nobles, merchants, peasants. Not only do men in this way merely free themselves from all sense of responsibility for their actions, but because, as they adapt themselves to fulfil the requirements of political organizations, they so constantly, persistently, and strenuously assure themselves and others that all men are not equal that they begin to believe it sincerely themselves. Thus we are assured that some men are superior and must be especially honored and obeyed; while, on the other hand, we are assured in every way that others are inferior, and therefore bound

to obey without murmur the commands of their superiors.

It is to this inequality, — the exaltation of some upon the abasement of others, — that we may chiefly attribute the incapacity which men display for discerning the folly of the existing system, with the cruelty and deceptions committed by some, and suffered by others.

There are certain men who have been made to believe that they are possessed of a peculiar importance and greatness, who have become so intoxicated by their imaginary superiority that they cease to realize their responsibility for the actions they commit; others who, on the contrary, have been told that they are insignificant beings, and that it is their duty to submit to those above them, and, as the natural result of this continual state of degradation, fall into a strange condition of stupefied servility, and in this state they, too, lose all sense of responsibility for their actions. And as to the intermediate class, subservient to those above them, and yet to a certain extent regarding themselves as superiors, they are apt to be both servile and arrogant, and they also lose the sense of responsibility.

One needs but to glance at any official of high rank in the act of reviewing the troops. Accompanied by his staff, mounted on a magnificently caparisoned charger, equipped in a brilliant uniform, displaying all his decorations, he rides in front of the ranks, while the band plays martial music and the soldiers present arms, standing, as they do, as though verily petrified with servility, — one has but to see this to understand how in such moments, under such conditions, both generals and soldiers might commit deeds which they never would have dreamed of committing.

But the intoxication to which men succumb under conditions like parades, pageants, religious ceremonies, and coronations, though acute, is not enduring, while there is another which is chronic, shared by all who have any authority whatsoever, from the Czar to the policemen on the street, shared, too, by the masses

who submit to authority in a state of stupefied servility, and who by way of justifying their submission, after the usual manner of slaves, ascribe the greatest importance and dignity to those whom they obey.

It is this delusion in regard to human inequality and the consequent intoxication of power and stupefaction of servility, which makes it possible for those who are associated in a state organization to commit crimes and suffer no remorse.

Under the influence of this intoxication, — there is an intoxication of servility as well as of power, — men seem to others, no less than to themselves, not the ordinary human beings which they really are, but specially privileged beings, — nobles, merchants, governors, judges, officers, kings, statesmen, soldiers, having no longer ordinary human duties, but only the duties of the class to which they belong.

Thus the landed proprietor who prosecuted the peasants on account of the forest did so because he did not regard himself as an ordinary man, with the same rights as the peasants, his neighbors, but as a great landowner and a member of the nobility, and, as such, exalted by the intoxication of authority, felt himself insulted by the opposition of the peasants. And regardless of the consequences, he sends in his petition to be reinstated in his pretended rights. The judges who rendered an unfair decision in his favor, did so because they fancied themselves different from ordinary men, who are guided only by truth; under the spell of the intoxication of authority, they believed themselves the guardians of a justice which cannot err; and at the same time, under the influence of servility, they considered themselves obliged to apply certain texts set forth in a certain book and called the laws; and all the other persons who took part in this affair, from the representatives of higher authority down to the last soldier ready to fire upon his brother, — they all accepted themselves in their conventionally accredited characters. Not one asked himself if he should take part in an act which his conscience reprobated, but each accepted himself as one who had simply to fulfil a cer-

tain function; let it be the Czar, anointed of God, an exceptional being called to look after the welfare of a hundred million men; let it be the noble; the priest, the recipient of grace through ordination; the soldier, bound by oath to fulfil commands without hesitation, — it is the same with all.

All their activity, past, present, and future, is stimulated by a like intoxicating influence. If they had not the firm conviction that the title of king, statesman, governor, judge, landowner, marshal of nobility, officer, or soldier is of serious import and necessity, not one of them could contemplate without horror and disgust his own share in the deeds done in these latter days.

Arbitrary distinctions, established hundreds of years ago, recognized for hundreds of years, described by special names and distinguished by special dress, sanctioned by all kinds of solemnities calculated to influence men through their emotions, have been so thoroughly impressed upon the human imagination that men have forgotten the common, everyday aspects of life; they look upon themselves and others from a point of view dependent upon outward conditions, and regard their own acts and those of their neighbors accordingly.

Here, for instance, we see a man of advanced years, a man perfectly in possession of his senses, who, because he has been decorated with some bauble, and is attired in a ridiculous habit, or because he is the holder of certain keys, or has received a bit of blue ribbon fitter for the wear of a coquettish child, when he is called general, chamberlain, chevalier of the order of St. Andrew, or some such absurdity, becomes at once proud, arrogant, happy; if, on the contrary, he fails to get the gewgaw or the nickname he expected, he becomes unhappy and ill, really to the point of sickness.

Or let us take a still more remarkable case. A man, morally sane, young, free, and absolutely safe from want, has no sooner received the name of district-attorney, of *Zemsky Nachalnik*, than he pounces upon some luckless widow, takes her from her small children, and throws her into jail, all because the poor woman has been secretly

selling wine, and thus depriving the treasury of 25 roubles' revenue. This man feels no remorse. Another still more surprising case is that of a man, ordinarily kind and good, who, because he wears a uniform or carries a medal, and is told that he is a keeper [*garde-champêtre*] or custom-house officer, considers himself justified in shooting men down, and no one ever dreams of blaming him for it, nor does he think himself in the wrong; but if he failed to fire upon his fellow-men he would then indeed be culpable. I say nothing of judges and jurymen, who condemn men to death, nor of troops, who slaughter thousands without a vestige of remorse, because they are told that they are not in the position of ordinary men, but are jurymen, judges, generals, soldiers.

This abnormal and surprising state of affairs is formulated in words like these: "As a man, I sympathize with him, but as a keeper, a judge, a general, a czar, or a soldier, I must torture or murder him."

So it is in this present case; men are on the way to slaughter and torment their famine-stricken brethren, admitting all the while that in this dispute between the peasants and the landowner the former are in the right (all the superior officials told me so). They know that the peasants are miserable, poor, and hungry, and that the landowner is wealthy and one who inspires no sympathy, and yet these men are going to kill the peasants in order that this landowner may gain 3000 roubles; and all because they regard themselves at the moment not as men, but one as a governor, another as a general of gendarmerie, another as an officer, or as soldiers, as the case may be, and bound not by the eternal laws of the human conscience, but by the accidental, transitory demands of their positions.

However strange it may appear, the only explanation of this surprising phenomenon is that men are like those under hypnotic influence, who, as suggested by the hypnotizers, imagine themselves in certain conditions. Thus, for instance, when it is suggested to a hypnotized patient that he is lame, he proceeds to limp; that he is blind, he ceases to see; that he is an animal, and he begins to

bite. And this is the state of all those who put their social and political duties before, and to the detriment of, their duties as human beings.

The essential characteristic of this condition is, that men, influenced by the thought that has been suggested to them, are unable to weigh their own actions, and simply obey the suggestion that has been communicated to them.

The difference between men artificially hypnotized and those under the influence of governmental suggestion consists in this, — that to the former their imagined environment is suggested suddenly by one person, and the suggestion operates only for a short time; whereas to the latter, their imagined position has been the result of gradual suggestion, going on, not for years, but for generations, and proceeds not from a single individual, but from their entire circumstances.

“But,” it will be objected, “always, in all societies, the majority of men, all the children, all the women, absorbed in the duties and cares of motherhood, all the great mass of workers, who are completely absorbed by their labor, all those of weak mind, all the enfeebled, the many who have come under the subjection of nicotine, alcohol, opium, or what not, — all these are not in a position to think for themselves, and consequently they submit to those who stand on a higher intellectual level, or they simply act according to domestic or social tradition, or in accordance with public opinion, — and in their acting thus there is nothing abnormal or contradictory.”

Indeed, there is nothing unnatural in it, and the readiness with which those who reason but little submit to the guidance of men who stand on a higher plane of consciousness is a universal phenomenon, and one without which social life could not be. The minority submit to principles which they have considered for themselves, and in consequence of the accordance of these principles with their reason; the rest of men, the majority, submit to the same principles, not because of personal apprehension of their validity, but because public opinion demands it.

Such submission to public opinion of men who can think but little for themselves has nothing abnormal about it so long as public opinion maintains its unity.

But there is a period when the higher forms of truth, having been revealed to the few, are in process of transmission to the many; and when the public opinion which was based on a lower plane of consciousness has already begun to waver, to give place to the new, ready to be established. And now men begin to view their own and other men's actions in the light of their new consciousness, while, influenced by inertia and tradition, they still continue to apply principles which were the outcome of the once highest consciousness, but which are now distinctly opposed to it. Hence it is that men find themselves in an abnormal position, and that, while realizing the necessity of conforming to this new public opinion, they lack courage to abandon conformity to the old one. This is the attitude which men, not only the men on the train, but the greater part of mankind, occupy toward Christian truths.

The attitude of those who belong to the upper classes, and who have all the advantages of high position, is the same as that of the lower classes who obey implicitly every command that is given to them.

Men of the ruling classes, who have no reasonable explanation of their privileges, and who in order to retain them are forced to repress all their nobler and more humane tendencies, try to persuade themselves of the necessity of their superior position; while the lower classes, stultified and oppressed by labor, are kept by the higher classes in a state of constant subjection.

This is the only possible explanation of the amazing phenomena which I witnessed on the train on the 9th of September, when men, naturally kindly and inoffensive, were to be seen going with an easy conscience to commit the most cruel, contemptible and idiotic of crimes.

It cannot be said that they are devoid of the conscience which should forbid them to do these things, as was the case with the men who, centuries ago, tortured

their fellow-men, scourged them to death, and burned them at the stake;—nay, it does exist in them, but it is kept dormant; auto-suggestion, as the psychologist calls it, keeps it thus among the upper classes, while the soldiers, the executioners, are under the hypnotic influence of the classes above them.

Conscience may slumber for a time, but it is not dead, and in spite of suggestion and auto-suggestion, it still whispers; yet a little while and it will awaken.

One might compare these men to a person under the influence of hypnotism, to whom it has been suggested that he shall commit some act contrary to his conception of right and wrong, as, for example, to murder his mother or his child. He feels himself so far coerced by the suggestion given him that he cannot refrain; and yet as the appointed time and place draw near, he seems to hear the stifled voice of conscience reviving, and he begins to draw back, he tries to awaken himself. And no one can tell whether or not hypnotic suggestion will conquer in the end; all depends on the relative strength of conflicting influences.

So it was with the soldiers on that train, so it is with all men of our period who take part in state violence and profit by it.

There was a time when, having gone forth to do violence and murder, to terrify by an example, men did not return until they had performed their mission, and then they suffered no doubt or remorse; but having done their fellow-men to death, they placidly returned to the bosom of their families, caressed their children, and with jest and laughter gave themselves up to all the pure joys of the hearth.

The men who were then benefited by violence, landed proprietors and men of wealth, believed their own interests to have a direct connection with these cruelties. It is different now, when men know, or at least suspect, the real reason why they do these things. They may close their eyes and try to silence their consciences, but neither those who commit such outrages, nor those who order them, can longer fail to discern the significance

of their acts. It may be that they do not fully appreciate it until they are on the point of committing the deed, or in some cases not until after the deed has been done. Those soldiers, for instance, who administered the tortures during the riot at the Yuzovo factory, at Nijni-Novgorod, Saratov, and Orel, did not fully apprehend the significance of what they were doing until it was all over; and now, both they who gave the orders, and they who executed them, suffer agonies of shame in the condemnation of public opinion and of their own conscience. I have talked with some of the soldiers about it; they either tried to change the subject or spoke of it with horror and repugnance.

There are instances of men coming to their senses, however, just as they are on the point of committing deeds of the kind. I know of a sergeant who during the riots was beaten by two peasants; he reported the fact to the commander of his company, but on the following day, when he saw the tortures inflicted upon other peasants, he persuaded his superior officer to destroy his report and to allow the peasants who had beaten him to depart unpunished. I know of a case where the soldiers appointed to shoot a prisoner refused to obey; and of other occasions where the superior officers have refused to direct tortures and executions.

The men who were in the train on the 9th of September started with the intention of torturing and murdering their fellow-men, but whether they would carry out their intention one could not know. However each one's share in the responsibility of this affair might be concealed from him, however strong the hypnotic suggestion among those taking part in it that they did so, not as men, but as functionaries, and so could violate all human obligations, — in spite of this, — the nearer they approached their destination, the more they must have hesitated about it.

It is impossible that the Governor should not pause at the moment of giving the decisive order to begin to murder and torture. He knows that the conduct of the Governor at Orel has excited the indignation of the

honorable men, and he himself, influenced by public opinion, has repeatedly expressed his own disapproval of the affair; he knows that the lawyer who ought to have accompanied him distinctly refused to do so, denouncing the whole affair as shameful; he knows that changes are likely to take place in the government at any moment, the result of which would be that those who were in favor yesterday may be in disgrace tomorrow; that if the Russian press remains silent, the foreign press may give an account of this business that might cover him with opprobrium. Already he feels the influence of the new public opinion which is to supersede and destroy the old one. Moreover, he has no assurance that his subordinates may not at the last moment refuse to obey him. He hesitates; it is impossible to divine what he will do.

The functionaries and officers who accompany him feel more or less as he does. They all know at the bottom of their hearts that they are engaged in a shameful business, that their share in it stains and degrades them in the eyes of those persons whose opinion they value. They know that a man who participates in deeds like these feels shame in the presence of the woman he loves. And like the Governor, they, too, feel doubtful whether the soldiers will obey them at the last moment. What a contrast to the self-assurance of their bearing on the platform of the station! Not only do they suffer, but they actually hesitate, and it is partly to hide their inward agitation that they assume an air of bravado. And this agitation increases as they draw nearer to their destination.

And, indeed, the entire body of soldiers, although they give no outward sign, and seem utterly submissive, are really in the same state of mind.

They are no longer like the soldiers of former days, who gave up the natural life of labor, and surrendered themselves to debauchery, rapine, and murder, as the Roman legions did, or the veterans of the Thirty Years' War, or even those soldiers of more modern times, whose term of service lasted twenty-five years. Now they are

for the most part men newly taken from their families, with all the memories of the wholesome, rational life from which they have been torn still fresh in their minds.

These young men, peasants for the most part, know what they are going to do; they know that the land-owners generally ill-treat the peasants, and that this probably is a case in point. Furthermore, the majority of them can read, and the books they read are not always in favor of the service; some even demonstrate its immorality. They find comrades who are independent thinkers, volunteers and young officers, and the seed of doubt respecting the merit and rectitude of such deeds as they are about to commit has already been sown in their minds. True, they have all been subjected to that ingenious discipline, the work of centuries, which tends to kill the spirit of independence in every man, and are so accustomed to automatic obedience that at the words of command, "Fire along the line!... Fire!" and so forth, their muskets are raised mechanically, and they perform the customary movements. But now, "Fire!" means something more than firing at a target; it means the murder of their abused, downtrodden fathers and brothers, who are grouped yonder in the street with their wives and children, gesticulating and crying out one does not know what.

There they are: here a man with thin beard, clad in a patched *kaftan*, with bast shoes on his feet, just like the father left behind in the province of Kazan or Ryazan; there another, with gray beard and bowed shoulders, leaning on a stout staff, just like the grandfather; and here a youth, with big boots and red shirt, just like himself a year ago, — the soldier who is about to shoot him. And there is a woman, with her bast shoes and petticoat, like the mother he left behind him.

And he must fire upon them!

And God alone knows what each soldier will do at the supreme moment. The slightest suggestion that they ought not to do it, that they must not do it, — a single word or hint, — would be enough to make them pause.

Every one of these men at the moment of action will be like one hypnotized, to whom it has been suggested to chop a log, who, as he approaches the object which is told to him is a log, sees as he raises the ax that it is not a log at all, but his own brother who lies sleeping there. He may accomplish the act which has been suggested to him, or he may awake at the moment of committing it. It is the same with these men. If they do not awaken, then will a deed be done as shocking as that committed in Orel, and the reign of official hypnotism will thereby gain new power. If they awaken, then not only will the deed remain undone, but many of those who hear of their refusal to do it will free themselves from the suggestion under whose influence they have hitherto acted, or at least will think of the possibility of doing so.

If only a few of these men come to their senses, and refuse to do the deed, and fearlessly express their opinion of the wickedness of such deeds, even such a few men might enable the rest to throw off the suggestion under the influence of which they act, and such evil deeds would not be done.

And another thing: if but a few of those persons who are simply spectators of the affair would, from their knowledge of other affairs of the same kind, boldly express their opinion to those engaged in it, and point out to them their folly, cruelty, and criminality, even this would not be without a salutary influence.

This is precisely what happened in the case of Tula. Partly because certain persons expressed reluctance to take a part in the affair; because a lady passenger and others showed their indignation at a railway station; because one of the colonels whose regiment was summoned to reduce the peasants to obedience declared that soldiers are not executioners, — because of these and other apparently trifling influences the affair took on a different aspect, and the troops, on arriving, did not commit outrages, but contented themselves with cutting down the trees and sending them to the landowner.

Had it not been that certain of these men conceived a distinct idea that they were doing wrong, and had not the idea got abroad, the occurrences at Orel would have been repeated. Had the feeling been stronger, perhaps the Governor and his troops would not have gone so far as even to fell the trees and deliver them to the landowner. Had it been more powerful still, perhaps the Governor would not have dared even to set out for Tula; its influence might even have gone so far as to prevent the Minister from framing, and the Emperor from confirming, such decrees.

All depends, as we come therefore to see, upon the degree of consciousness that men possess of Christian truth.

Hence, let all men to-day who wish to promote the welfare of mankind direct their efforts toward the development of this consciousness of Christian truth.

But, strange to say, those men who nowadays talk most of the amelioration of human life, and who are the acknowledged leaders of public opinion, declare this to be precisely the wrong thing to do, and that there are more effectual expedients for improving human existence. They insist that any improvement in the conditions of human life must be accomplished, not through individual moral effort, nor through the propagation of truth, but through progressive modifications in the general material conditions of life. Therefore, they say, individual effort should be devoted to the gradual reform of the everyday conditions of life; and seeing that any individual profession of the truth which may happen to be incompatible with the existing order is harmful, because it provokes, on the part of the government, an opposition which prevents the individual from continuing efforts which may be of utility to society.

According to this theory, all changes in the life of mankind proceed from the same causes that control the lives of the brute creation.

And all the religious teachers, like Moses and the Prophets, Confucius, Lao Tze, Buddha, and Christ, preached their doctrines, and their followers adopted them, not because they divined and loved the truth, but

because the political, social, and, above all, the economical conditions of the nations in whose midst these doctrines found expression were favorable to their exposition and development.

Therefore the principal activity of a man who wishes to serve the world and to improve the condition of his kind should be directed, according to this theory, not to teaching and profession of the truth, but to the improvement of the outward, political, social, and, above all, economic conditions of life. The change in these conditions may be accomplished by serving the government and introducing liberal and progressive principles, by contributing to the development of commerce, by propagating socialistic principles, but, above all, by promoting the diffusion of science.

According to this doctrine, it is a matter of no consequence whether one profess the revealed truth or not; there is no obligation to live in accordance with its precepts, or to refrain from actions opposed to them, — as, for instance, to serve the government, though one considers its power detrimental; to profit by the organization of capital, though one disapproves of it; to subscribe to certain forms of religion, though one considers them superstitions. Practise in the courts of law, though one believes them to be corrupt; or enter the army, or take the oath of allegiance, or indeed lie, or do anything that is convenient. These things are trivial; for it is a matter of vital importance, instead of challenging the prevailing customs of the day, to conform to them, though they be contrary to one's convictions, satisfied meanwhile to try and liberalize the existing institutions, by encouraging commerce, propagating socialistic doctrines, and generally promoting *soi-disant* science and civilization. According to this convenient theory, it is possible for a man to remain a landowner, a merchant, a manufacturer, a judge, a functionary paid by the government, a soldier, an officer, and at the same time to be humanitarian, socialist, and revolutionary.

Hypocrisy, formerly growing only out of such religious doctrines as that of original sin, redemption, the Church,

has in these latter days, by means of the new theory, gained for itself a scientific basis, and those whose intellectual habit of mind renders the hypocrisy of the Church unendurable, are yet deceived by this new hypocrisy with the *cachet* of science. If in old times a man who professed the doctrines taught by the Church could with a clear conscience take part in any political crime, and benefit by so doing, provided he complied with the external forms of his faith, men of the present day, who deny Christianity, and view the conduct of life from a secular and scientific standpoint, are every whit as sure of their own innocence, even of their lofty morality, when they participate in and benefit by the evil-doings of government.

It is not alone in Russia, but in France, England, Germany, and America as well, that we find the wealthy landed proprietor, who, in return for having allowed the men who live on his estate and who supply him with the products of the soil, extorts from these men, who are often poverty-stricken, all that he possibly can. Whenever these oppressed laborers make an attempt to gain something for themselves from the lands which the rich man calls his own, without first asking his consent, troops are called out, who torture and put to death those who have been bold enough to take such liberties.

By methods like this are claims to the ownership of land made good. One would hardly imagine that a man who lived in such a wicked and selfish manner could call himself a Christian, or even liberal. One would think that if a man cared to seem Christian or liberal, he would at least cease to plunder and to torment his fellow-men with the aid of the government, in order to vindicate his claims to the ownership of land. And such would be the case were it not for the metaphysical hypocrisy which teaches that from a religious standpoint it is immaterial whether one owns land or not, and that, from the scientific point of view, for a single individual to give up his land would be a useless sacrifice, without any effect on the well-being of mankind, the amelioration of which can only be brought about by a progressive modification of outward conditions.

Meanwhile, your modern landowner will, without the least hesitation or doubt, organize an agricultural exhibition, or a temperance society, or, through his wife and daughters, distribute warm underclothing and soup to three old women; and he will hold forth before the domestic circle, or in society, or as a member of committees, or in the public press, upon the gospel of love for mankind in general and the agricultural class in particular, that class which he never ceases to torment and oppress. And those who occupy a similar position will believe in him and sing his praises, and take counsel together upon the best methods of improving the condition of those very laboring classes they spend their lives in exploiting; and for this purpose they suggest every possible expedient, save that which would effect it, — namely, to desist from robbing the poor of the land necessary for their subsistence.

(A striking example of this hypocrisy was presented by the Russian landowners during the struggle with the famine of last year,¹ a famine of which they were themselves the cause, and by which they profited, not only by selling bread at the highest price, but even by disposing of the dried potato-plants for five roubles a *dessiatin*, to be used as fuel by the freezing peasants.)

The business of the merchant, again (as is the case with business of any kind), is based upon a series of frauds; he takes advantage of the necessities of men by buying his merchandise below, and selling it above, its value. One would think that a man, the mainspring of whose activity is what he himself in his own language calls shrewdness, ought to feel ashamed of this, and never dream of calling himself Christian or liberal while he continues a merchant. But, according to the new metaphysic of hypocrisy, he may pass for a virtuous man and still pursue his evil career; the religious man has but to believe, the liberal man but to coöperate, in the reform of external conditions to promote the general progress of commerce; the rest does not signify. So this merchant (who, besides, often sells bad commodities,

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adulterates, and uses false weights and measures, or deals exclusively in commodities that imperil human life, such as alcohol or opium) frankly considers himself, and is considered by others, — always provided he only does not cheat his colleagues in business and knavery, his fellow-tradesmen, — a model of conscientiousness and honesty. And if he spend one per cent of his stolen money on some public institution, hospital, museum, or school, men call him the benefactor of the people on whose exploitation all his welfare depends; and if he gives but the least part of this money to the Church or to the poor, then is he deemed an exemplary Christian indeed.

Take again the factory-owner, whose entire income is derived from reducing the pay of his workmen to its lowest terms, and whose whole business is carried on by forced and unnatural labor, endangering the health of generations of men. One would suppose that if this man professed Christian or liberal principles he would cease to sacrifice human lives to his interests. But, according to the existing theory, he encourages industry, and it would be a positive injury to society if he were to abandon his operations, even supposing he were willing to do so. And, too, this man, the cruel slave-driver of thousands of human beings, having built for those injured in his service minute houses, with gardens six feet in extent, or established a fund, or a home for the aged, or a hospital, is perfectly satisfied that he has more than atoned for the moral and physical jeopardy into which he has plunged so many lives; and he continues to live calmly, proud of his work.

We find that the functionary, civil, military, or ecclesiastical, who performs his duties to gratify his selfishness or ambition, or, as is more usually the case, for the sake of the stipend, collected in the shape of taxes from an exhausted and crippled people, — if, by a rare exception, he does not directly steal from the public treasury, — considers himself, and is considered by his equals, a most useful and virtuous member of society.

There are judges and other legal functionaries who

know that their decisions have condemned hundreds and thousands of unfortunate men to be torn from their families and thrown into prison. There these hapless beings are locked up in solitary confinement, or sent to the galleys, where they go desperate and put an end to themselves by starving themselves to death, by swallowing glass, or by some such means. And who knows what the mothers, wives, and children of these men suffer by the separation and imprisonment, and the disgrace of it, — who have vainly begged for pardon for their sons, husbands, brothers, or that their lot may be a little alleviated. But the judge or other legal functionary is so primed with the current hypocrisy that he himself, his colleagues, his wife, and his friends are all quite sure, despite what he does, that he is a good and sensible man. According to the current philosophy of hypocrisy, such a man performs a duty of great importance to the public. And this man, who has injured hundreds or thousands of human beings, who owe it to him that they have lost their belief in goodness and their faith in God, goes to church with a benevolent smile, listens to the Bible, makes liberal speeches, caresses his children, bestows moral lessons upon them for their edification, and grows sentimental over imaginary suffering.

Not only these men, their wives and children, but the entire community around them, all the teachers, actors, cooks, jockeys, live by preying upon the life-blood of the working-people, which in one way or another they absorb like leeches. Every one of their days of pleasure costs thousands of days in the lives of the workers. They see the suffering and privation of these workmen, of their wives and children, of their aged and feeble. They know what punishments are visited upon those who attempt to resist the organized system of pillage, but so far from abandoning or concealing their luxurious habits, they flaunt them in the faces of those whom they oppress and by whom they are hated. All the while they assure themselves and others that they have the welfare of the working-man greatly at heart. On Sundays, clad in rich garments, they drive in their carriages to churches

where the mockery of Christianity is preached, and listen there to the words of men who have learned their falsehoods by heart. Some of these men wear stoles, some wear white cravats; they all preach the doctrine of love for one's neighbor, a doctrine belied by their daily lives. And they have all grown so accustomed to playing this part that they really believe themselves to be what they pretend.

This universal hypocrisy, which has become to every class of society at the present day like the air it breathes, is so familiar that men are no longer exasperated by it. It is very fitting that hypocrisy should signify acting or playing of a part. It has become so much a matter of course that it no longer excites surprise when the representatives of Christ pronounce a blessing over murderers as they stand in rank holding their guns in the position which signifies, in military parlance, "for prayers," or when the priests and pastors of various Christian sects accompany the executioner to the scaffold, and, by lending the sanction of their presence to murder, make men believe it compatible with Christianity. (One minister was present when experiments in "electrocution" took place in the United States.) At the International Prison Exposition recently held in St. Petersburg, where instruments of torture, such as chains, and models of prison-cells for solitary confinement, — means of torture worse than the knout or the rod, — were on exhibition, sympathetic ladies and gentlemen went to see them, and seemed greatly entertained.

No one marvels to find liberal science insisting upon the equality, fraternity, and liberty of men on the one hand, while on the other it is striving to prove the necessity of armies, executions, custom-houses, of censorship of the press, of legalized prostitution, of the expulsion of foreign labor, of the prohibition of emigration, and of the necessity and justice of colonization established by the pillage and extermination of whole races of so-called savages, etc.

They talk of what will happen when all men shall profess what they call Christianity (by which they mean the different conflicting creeds); when every one will be fed

and clothed; when men will communicate with one another all over the world by telegraph and telephones, and will travel in balloons; when all working-men will accept the doctrine of socialism; when the trade unions will embrace many millions of men and possess millions of money; when all men will be educated, will read the papers, and be familiar with all the sciences.

But what good will this do if after all these improvements men are still false to the truth?

The miseries of men are caused by disunion, and disunion arises from the fact that men follow not truth, but falsehood, of which there is no end. Truth is the only bond by which men may be united; and the more sincerely men strive after the truth the nearer they approach to true unity.

But how are men to be united in the truth, or even approach it, if they not only fail to proclaim the truth which they possess, but actually think it useless to do so, and pretend to believe in something which they know to be a lie? In reality no improvement in the condition of mankind is possible while men continue to hide the truth from themselves, nor until they acknowledge that their unity, and consequently their welfare, can be promoted only by the spirit of truth; until they admit that to profess, and to act in obedience to the truth as it has been revealed to them, is more important than all things else.

Let all the material progress ever dreamt of by religious and scientific men be made; let all men accept Christianity, and let all the improvements suggested by the Bellamys and Richets, with every possible addition and correction, be carried out; and yet if the hypocrisy of to-day still flourishes, if men do not make known the truth that is within them, but go on pretending to believe what they know to be untrue, showing respect where they no longer feel it, their condition will never improve; on the contrary, it will become worse. The more men are raised above want, the more telegraphs, telephones, books, newspapers, and reviews they possess, the more numerous will be the channels for the diffusion of falsehood and hypocrisy, and the more at variance and miser-

able will men become, — and it is even so at the present time.

Let all those material changes take place, and still the position of humanity will in no way be improved by them ; but let every man, so far as he is able, begin at once and live up to his highest ideal of the truth or, at the least, cease to defend a lie, then indeed should we see even in this year of 1893 such an advance in the establishment of the truth upon earth, and in the deliverance of mankind, as could hardly be hoped for in a hundred years.

It was not without reason that the only harsh and denunciatory words that Christ uttered were addressed to hypocrites. It is neither theft, nor robbery, nor murder, nor fornication, nor fraud, but falsehood, that particular hypocritical falsehood, which destroys in men's conscience the distinction between good and evil, which corrupts them and takes from them the possibility of avoiding evil and of seeking good, which deprives them of that which constitutes the essence of a true human life, — it is this which bars the way to all improvement. Those men who do evil, knowing not the truth, inspire in the beholder compassion for their victims and repugnance for themselves, but they only injure the few whom they molest. Whereas those men who, knowing the good, yet pursue the evil, wearing all the while the mantle of hypocrisy, commit a wrong, not only against themselves and their victims, but also against thousands of other men who are deceived by the falsehood under which they conceal the wrong.

Thieves, robbers, murderers, rogues, who commit acts which they themselves, as well as other men, know to be evil, serve as a warning to show men what is evil, and make them hate it. Those, however, who steal, rob, torture, and murder, justifying themselves by pretended religious, scientific, or other motives, like the landowners, merchants, factory-owners, and government servants of the present time, by provoking imitation, injure not only their victims, but thousands and millions of men who are corrupted by their influence, and who become so blinded that they cannot distinguish the difference between good and evil.

One fortune acquired by trading in the necessities of life or in articles that tend to demoralize men, or by speculations in the stock exchange, or by the acquisition of cheap lands which subsequently rise in value by reason of the increasing needs of the people, or by the establishment of factories that endanger human health and human lives, or by rendering civil or military service to the State, or by any occupation that tends to the demoralization of mankind, — a fortune acquired in any of these ways, not only permitted, but approved by the leaders of society, when, furthermore, it is supported by a show of charity, surely demoralizes men more than millions of thefts, frauds, or robberies, — sins committed against the laws of the land and subject to judicial prosecution.

A single enforcement of capital punishment, ordained by men of education and wealth, sanctioned by the approval of the Christian clergy, and declared to be an act of justice essential to the welfare of the State, tends far more to degrade and brutalize mankind than hundreds and thousands of murders committed in passion by the ignorant. A more demoralizing scene than the execution suggested by Jukovsky, calculated as it is to excite a feeling of religious exaltation, it would be difficult to conceive.¹

A war, even of the shortest duration, — with all its customary consequences, the destruction of harvests, the thefts, the unchecked debauchery and murders, with the usual explanations of its necessity and justice, with the accompanying glorification and praise bestowed upon military exploits, upon patriotism, devotion to the flag, with the assumption of tenderness and care for the wounded, — will do more in one year to demoralize men than thousands of robberies, arsons, and murders committed in the course of centuries by individual men carried away by passion.

The existence of one household, one not even extravagant beyond the ordinary limits, esteeming itself virtuous and innocent, which yet consumes the production of

¹ See vol. iv. of the works of Jukovsky (a Russian poet).

enough to support thousands of the men who live near in poverty and distress, has a more degrading influence on mankind than innumerable orgies of gross shop-keepers, officers, or workmen who are addicted to drink and debauchery, and who smash mirrors and crockery by way of amusement.

One solemn procession, one religious service, or one sermon from the pulpit, embodying a falsehood which the preacher himself does not believe, does infinitely more harm than thousands of frauds, adulterations of food, etc.

Men talk of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees ; but the hypocrisy of our contemporaries far surpasses the comparatively harmless sanctimoniousness of the Pharisees. They at least had an outward religious law, whose fulfilment may perhaps have prevented them from discerning their duty toward their neighbors ; indeed, those duties had not then been distinctly defined. To-day there is no such law. (I do not consider such gross and stupid men as even now believe that sacraments or absolution of the Pope can free them from sins.) On the contrary, the law of the gospel, which in one form or another we all profess, makes our duties perfectly plain. Indeed, those precepts which were but vaguely indicated by certain of the prophets have since been so clearly formulated, have grown to be such truisms, that the very school-boys and hack writers repeat them. Therefore men of our times cannot feign ignorance concerning them.

Those men who enjoy the advantages of the existing system, and who are always protesting love for their neighbor, without suspicion that their own lives are an injury to their neighbors, are like the robber who, caught with an uplifted knife, his victim crying desperately for help, protests that he did not know that he was doing anything unpleasant to the man whom he was in the act of robbing and about to murder. Since the denial of this robber and murderer would be of no avail, his act being patent to all observers, it would seem equally futile for our fellow-citizens, who live by the

sufferings of the oppressed, to assure themselves and others that they desire the welfare of those whom they never cease to rob, and that they had not realized the nature of the methods by which their prosperity had been attained.

We can no longer persuade ourselves that we do not know of the one hundred thousand men in Russia alone who have been shut up in galleys or in prisons for the purpose of securing to us our property and our peace ; and that we do not know of the existence of those courts of law at which we preside, to which we bring our accusations, which sentence those men, who have attacked our property or our lives, to the galleys, to imprisonment, or to exile, where human beings, no worse than they who have pronounced judgment upon them, become degraded and lost ; nor that we do not know that everything that we possess has been won and is preserved at the expense of murder and violence. We cannot shut our eyes and pretend that we do not see the policeman, who, armed with a revolver, paces before our window, protecting us while we are eating our excellent dinner, or when we are at the theater seeing a new play ; nor do not know of the existence of the soldiers who will appear armed with guns and cartridges whenever our property is menaced. We know perfectly well that if we finish our dinner, see the new play to its end, enjoy a merry-making at Christmas, take a walk, go to a ball, a race, or a hunt, we owe it to the policeman's revolver or the ball in the soldier's musket, which will pierce the hungry belly of the disinherited man who, with watering mouth, peeps round the corner at our pleasures, and who might interrupt them if the policeman or the soldiers in the barracks were not ready to appear at our first call. Hence, as the man who is caught in the act of robbery in broad daylight cannot deny that he threatened his victim with a knife for the purpose of stealing his purse, it might be supposed that we could no longer represent to ourselves and to others that the soldiers and policemen whom we see around us are here, not for the purpose

of protecting us, but to repulse foreign enemies, to assure public order, to adorn by their presence public rejoicings and ceremonies. We cannot pretend we do not know that men are not fond of starving to death. We know that they do not like to die of hunger, being deprived of the right to earn their living from the soil upon which they live, that they are not anxious to work ten to fourteen hours a day underground, standing in water, or in over-heated rooms, twelve or fourteen hours a day, or at night, manufacturing articles which contribute to our pleasures. It would seem impossible to deny what is so evident, and yet it is what we do deny.

It cannot be denied that there are people of the wealthy class, and I am glad to say that I meet them more and more frequently, particularly in the younger generation and among women, who, on being reminded by what means and at what a price their pleasures are obtained, instantly admit the truth of it, and with bowed heads exclaim: "Ah, do not tell us of it! If it is as you say, one cannot live!" If, however, there are some who are willing to admit their sin, though they know not how to escape from it, still, the majority of men nowadays have become so confirmed in hypocrisy that they boldly deny facts that are patent to every one who has eyes.

"It is all nonsense," they say. "No one forces the people to work for the landowners or in the factories. It is a matter of mutual accommodation. Large properties and capital are indispensable, because they enable men to organize companies and provide work for the laboring classes, and the work in mills and factories is by no means so dreadful as you represent it. When real abuses are found to exist, the government and society in general take measures to abolish them and to render the labor of the working-men easier and more agreeable. The working-classes are used to physical labor, and are not as yet capable of doing anything else. The poverty of the people is caused neither by the landowners nor by the tyranny of the capitalists; it springs from other causes, — from ignorance, disorder,

and intemperance. We, the governing classes, who counteract this state of poverty by wise administration; and we, the capitalists, who counteract it by the multiplication of useful inventions; and we, the liberals, who contribute our share by instituting trade unions and by diffusing education, —these are the methods by which we promote the welfare of the people, without making any radical change in our position. We do not wish all to be poor like the poor; we wish all to be rich like the rich.

“As to torturing and killing men for the purpose of making them work for the rich, that is all sophistry; the troops are sent out to quell disturbances when men, not appreciating their advantages, rebel and disturb the peace essential for the general welfare. It is equally necessary to restrain malefactors, for whom prisons, gallows, and the like are established. We are anxious enough to abolish them as far as possible ourselves, and are working for that purpose.”

Hypocrisy, which nowadays is supported by two methods, the quasi-religious and the quasi-scientific, has attained such proportions, that if we did not live in its atmosphere continually, it would be impossible to believe that humanity could sink to such depths of self-deception. Men have reached so surprising a state, their hearts have become so hardened, that they look and do not see; listen, and do not hear or understand.

For a long time they have been living a life that is contrary to their conscience. Were it not for the aid of hypocrisy they would be unable so to live, for such a life, so opposed to conscience, can only continue because it is veiled by hypocrisy.

And the greater the difference between the practice and the conscience of men, the more elastic becomes hypocrisy. Yet even hypocrisy has its limits, and I believe that we have reached them.

Every man of the present day, with the Christian consciousness that has involuntarily become his, may be likened to a sleeper who dreams that he is doing what even in his dream he knows he ought not to do. In

the depths of his dream-consciousness he realizes his conduct, and yet seems unable to change his course, and to cease doing that which he is aware he should not do.

Then, in the progress of his dream, his state of mind becoming less and less endurable, he begins to doubt the reality of what has seemed so real, and makes a conscious effort to break the spell that holds him.

The average man of our Christian world is in exactly the same strait. He feels that everything going on around him is absurd, senseless, and impossible; that the situation is becoming more and more painful, that it has indeed reached the crisis.

It is impossible that we of the present age, endowed with the Christian conscience that has become a part of our very flesh and blood as it were, who live with a full consciousness of the dignity of man and the equality of all men, who feel our need for peaceable relations with each other and for the unity of all nations, should go on living in such a way. It is impossible that all our pleasures, all our satisfactions, should be purchased by the sufferings and the lives of our brethren; impossible that we should be ready at a moment's notice to rush upon each other like wild beasts, one nation against another, and relentlessly destroy the lives and labor of men, only because one foolish diplomatist or ruler says or writes something foolish to another.

It is impossible; and yet all men of our time see that this is what does happen every day, and all wait for the catastrophe, while the situation grows more and more strained and painful.

And as a man in his sleep doubts the reality of his dream and longs to awaken and return to real life, so the average man of our day cannot, in the bottom of his heart, believe the terrible situation in which he finds himself, and which is growing worse and worse, to be the reality. He longs to attain to a higher reality, the consciousness of which is already within him.

And like this sleeper, who has but to make the conscious effort to ask himself whether it be a dream, in

order to transform its seeming hopelessness into a joyous awakening, our average man has but to make a conscious effort and ask himself, "Is not all this an illusion?" in order to feel himself forthwith like the awakened sleeper, transported from an hypocritical and horrible dream-world into a living, peaceful, and joyous real one.

And for this he has no need of any heroic achievement; he has only to make the effort prompted by his moral consciousness.

But is man able to make this effort?

According to the existing theory, one indispensable from the point of view of hypocrisy, man is not free and may not change his life.

"A man cannot change his life, because he is not a free agent. He is not a free agent, because his acts are the result of preceding causes. And whatever he may do, certain it is that preceding causes always determine that a man must act in one way rather than in another; therefore a man is not free to change his life," — thus argue the defenders of the metaphysic of hypocrisy. And they would be perfectly right if man were an unconscious and stationary being, incapable of apprehending the truth, and unable to advance to a higher state by means of it. But man is a conscious being, able to grow more and more in the knowledge of truth. Therefore if he be not free in his acts, the causes of these acts, which consist in the recognition simply of such and such truth, are yet within his mastery.

So that if a man is not free to do certain acts, he is yet free to work toward the suppression of the moral causes which prevent their performance. He may be likened to the engineer of a locomotive, who, though not at liberty to change the past or present motion of his engine, is yet free to determine its future progress.

No matter what an intelligent man may do, he adopts a certain course of action only because he acknowledges to himself that at the moment that course alone is the right one; or because he has formerly recognized it as

such, and now continues to act as he does through force of habit, or through mental inertia.

Whether a man eats or abstains from food, whether he works or rests, whether he avoids danger or seeks it, he acts as he does because he considers it to be reasonable at the time, or because previously he saw that the truth consisted in acting in that way and not in another.

The admission or the denial of a certain truth depends not on outward causes, but on certain conditions that man finds within himself. Thus frequently, with all the outward and, as it may seem, favorable conditions for recognizing the truth, one may reject it, while another may receive it under the most unfavorable conditions, and without apparent motives. As it is said in the gospel: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him;" — that is to say, the recognition of truth, which is the cause of all the manifestations of a man's life, does not depend on outward conditions, but on certain inherent qualities which escape recognition.

Therefore a man who is not free in his acts still feels himself free in regard to the cause of his acts; that is, in regard to the recognition or non-recognition of truth.

Thus a man who, under the influence of passion, has committed a deed contrary to the truth he knows, still remains free in recognizing or denying the truth; in other words, denying the truth, he may consider his act necessary and justify himself in committing it, or, accepting the truth, he may acknowledge his deed to be evil and himself guilty.

Thus a gambler or a drunkard, who has succumbed to his passion, is free to acknowledge gambling or drunkenness either as evils, or as amusements without consequence. In the first instance, if he cannot get rid of his passion at once, he becomes free from it gradually, according to the depth of his conviction of its evil. In the second instance, his passion grows and gradually deprives him of all chance of deliverance.

So, too, with a man who, unable to endure the scorching flames for the rescue of his friend, himself escapes from

a burning house, while he recognizes the truth that a man should save the life of his fellow-man at the peril of his own, is yet free to look upon his act as evil, and therefore to condemn himself for it; or, denying this truth, to judge his act to be both natural and necessary, and so justify himself in his own opinion. In the first instance, his recognition of the truth, even though he has not acted in accordance with it, helps him to prepare for a series of self-sacrificing actions that will inevitably follow such recognition. In the second instance, he prepares for a series of actions just as selfish.

I do not say that a man is always free to recognize or not to recognize every truth. Certain truths there are, long since recognized by men, and transmitted by tradition, education, and mere force of habit until they have become second nature; and there are other truths which men perceive as but dimly and afar. A man is not free *not* to recognize the first of these; he is not free to recognize the second. But there is a third category of truths, which have not as yet become unquestioned motors of his activity, but have revealed themselves to man so unmistakably that he is unable to disregard them; he must inevitably consider them, and either accept or reject them. It is by his relation to these truths that a man's freedom is manifested.

Each man in his perception of truth is like a wayfarer who walks by the aid of a lantern whose light he casts before him: he does not see what as yet has not been revealed by its beams, he does not see the path he has left behind, merged again in the darkness; but at any given point he sees that which the lantern reveals, and he is always at liberty to choose one side of the road or the other.

There exist for each man certain concealed truths, as yet unrevealed to his mental vision; certain others, which he has experienced, assimilated, and forgotten; and yet others, that rise up before him demanding immediate recognition from his reason. And it is in the recognition or the disregard of these truths that what we call freedom becomes evident.

All the apparent difficulty of the question of man's liberty comes from the fact that those who seek to solve it represent man as stationary in the presence of the truth.

Undoubtedly he is not free if we look upon him as a stationary being; if we forget that the life of all humanity is an eternal procession from darkness to light, from the lower conception of truth to a higher one, from truth mingled with error to purer truth.

A man would not be free if he were ignorant of all truth; neither would he be free, nor even have any conception of liberty, if the truth were suddenly revealed to him in its entire purity and without any admixture of error.

But man is not a stationary being. And as he advances in life, every individual discovers an ever increasing proportion of truth, and thus becomes less liable to error.

The relations of man to truth are threefold. Some truths are so familiar to him that they have become the unconscious springs of action; others have only been dimly revealed to him; again others, though still unfamiliar, are revealed to him so plainly that they force themselves upon his attention, and inevitably, in one way or another, he is obliged to consider them. He cannot ignore them, but must either recognize or repudiate them.

And it is in the recognition or in the disregard of these truths that man's free agency is manifested.

A man's freedom does not consist in a faculty of acting independently of his environment and the various influences it brings to bear upon his life, but in his power to become, through recognizing and professing the truth that has been revealed to him, a free and willing laborer at the eternal and infinite work performed by God and his universe; or, in shutting his eyes to truth, to become a slave and be forced against his will into a way in which he is loath to go.

Not only does truth point out the direction a man's life *should* take, but it opens the only road he *can* take.

Hence, all men will invariably, free or not, follow the road of truth; — some willingly, doing the work they have set themselves to do; others involuntarily, by submitting in spite of themselves to the law of life. It is in the power of choice that a man's freedom lies.

Freedom, in limits so narrow as these, appears to men so insignificant that they fail to perceive it. The believers in causation prefer to overlook it; the believers in unlimited free will, keeping in view their own ideal, disdain a freedom to them so insignificant. Freedom, confined between the limits of entire ignorance of the truth, or of the knowledge of only a part of it, does not seem to them to be freedom, the more so that whether a man is or is not willing to recognize the truth revealed unto him, he will inevitably be forced to obey it in life.

A horse harnessed to a load in company with other horses is not free to remain in one place. If he does not pull the load, the load will strike him and force him to move in the direction it is going, thus compelling him to advance. Still, in spite of this limitation of freedom, the horse is still free to pull the load of his own accord, or be pushed forward by it. The same reasoning can be applied to human freedom.

Be this freedom great or small as compared with the chimerical freedom for which we sigh, it is the only true freedom, and through it alone is to be found all the happiness accessible to man. And not only does this freedom promote the happiness of men, but it is the only means through which the work of the world can be accomplished.

According to the doctrine of Christ, a man who limits his observation of life to the sphere in which there is no freedom — to the sphere of effects — that is, of acts — does not live a true life. He only lives a true life who has transferred his life into the sphere in which freedom lies, — into the domain of first causes, — that is to say, by the recognition and practice of the truth revealed to him.

The man who consecrates his life to sensual acts is

ever performing acts that depend on temporary causes beyond his control. Of himself he does nothing; it only seems to him that he is acting independently, whereas in reality all that he imagines he is doing by himself is done through him by a superior force; he is not the creator of life, but its slave. But the man who devotes his life to the acknowledgment and practice of the truth revealed to him unites himself with the source of universal life, and accomplishes, not personal, individual acts, that depend on the conditions of time and space, but acts that have no causes, but are in themselves causes of all else, and have an endless and unlimited significance.

Because of their setting aside the essence of true life, which consists in the recognition and practice of the truth, and directing their efforts toward the improvement of the external conditions of life, men of the pagan life conception may be likened to passengers on a steamer, who should, in their anxiety to reach their destination, extinguish the engine-fires, and instead of making use of steam and screw, try during a storm to row with oars which cannot reach the water.

The Kingdom of God is attained by effort, and it is only those who make the effort that do attain it. It is this effort, which consists in sacrificing outward conditions for the sake of the truth, by which the Kingdom of God is attained,—an effort which can and ought to be made now, in our own epoch.

Men have but to understand this: that they must cease to care for material and external matters, in which they are not free; let them apply one hundredth part of the energy now used by them in outward concerns to those in which they are free,—to the recognition and profession of the truth that confronts them, to the deliverance of themselves and others from the falsehood and hypocrisy which conceal the truth,—and then the false system of life which now torments us, which threatens us with still greater suffering, will be destroyed at once without struggle. Then the Kingdom of Heaven, at least in that first stage for which men through the de-

velopment of their consciousness are already prepared, will be established.

As one shake is sufficient to precipitate into crystals a liquid saturated with salt, so at the present time it may be that only the least effort is needed in order that the truth, already revealed to us, should spread among hundreds, thousands, millions of men, and a public opinion become established in conformity with the existing consciousness, and the entire social organization become transformed. It depends upon us to make this effort.

If only each of us would try to understand and recognize the Christian truth, which in the most varied forms surrounds us on all sides, pleading to be admitted into our hearts; if we would cease to lie and pretend that we do not see this truth, or that we are anxious to fulfil it, excepting in the one thing that it really demands; if we would only recognize this truth which calls us, and would fearlessly profess it, — we should find forthwith that hundreds, thousands, and millions of men are in the same position as ourselves, fearing like ourselves to stand alone in its recognition, and waiting only to hear its avowal from others.

If men would only cease to be hypocrites they would perceive at once that this cruel organization of society, which alone hampers them and yet appears to them like something immutable, necessary, and sacred, established by God, is already wavering, and is maintained only by the hypocrisy and the falsehood of ourselves and our fellow-men.

But if it be true that it depends only on ourselves to change the existing order of life, have we the right to do it without knowing what we shall put in its place? What will become of the world if the present system be destroyed?

“What is there beyond the walls of the world we leave behind us?

“Fear seizes us, — emptiness, space, freedom.... — how is one to go on, not knowing whither? How is one to lose, without the hope of gain?....

“Had Columbus reasoned thus he never would have

weighed anchor. It was madness to attempt to cross an unknown ocean, to set sail for a country whose very existence was doubtful. But he discovered a new world through this madness. To be sure, if people had only to move from one furnished house into another and a more commodious one, it would be an easy matter, but the trouble lies in there being no one to prepare the new apartments. The future looks more uncertain still than the ocean, — it promises nothing, — it will only be what men and circumstances make it.

“If you are content with the old world, try to preserve it; it is sick, and will not live long. But if you can no longer live in the eternal conflict between your convictions and life, thinking one way and acting another, take it upon yourselves to leave the shelter of the blanched and ruinous arches of the Middle Ages. I am aware that this is not an easy matter. It is hard to part with all one has been accustomed to from birth. Men are ready for great sacrifices, but not those which the new life demands of them. Are they ready to sacrifice their present civilization, their mode of life, their religion, their conventional morality? Are they ready to be deprived of all the results of such prolonged efforts, the results we have boasted of for three centuries, of all the conveniences and attractions of our existence, to give the preference to wild youth rather than to civilized senility, to pull down the palace built by our fathers simply for the pleasure of laying the foundation of a new house, which, without doubt, will not be completed till long after our time.”¹ Thus wrote, almost half a century ago, a Russian author, who, with penetrating vision, clearly discerned even at that time what is recognized by every man to-day who reflects a little, — the impossibility of continuing life on the former basis, and the necessity of establishing some new mode of existence.

It is plain from the simplest and most ordinary point of view that it is folly to remain under a roof that threatens to fall, and that one must leave it. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a more miserable situation than that of the

¹ Herzen, vol. v., p. 55.

present Christian world, with its nations arrayed in arms one against the other, with its ever increasing taxes for the purpose of supporting its growing armaments, with the burning hatred of the working-classes for the rich, with war suspended above all like the sword of Damocles ready to fall, as it may, at any moment.

It is doubtful whether any revolution could be more disastrous than the present social order, or rather disorder, with its perpetual victims of overwork, misery, drunkenness, dissipation, with all the horrors of impending war that in one year will sacrifice more lives than all the revolutions of the present century.

What will become of mankind if each one fulfils that which God demands through the conscience that is in him. Shall I be safe if, under the orders of my master, I accomplish in his great workshop the tasks he has set me, although, ignorant of his final plans, I may think it strange? Nor is it alone the question of the future that troubles men when they hesitate to do the master's bidding. They are concerned about the question as to how they are to live without the familiar conditions which we call science, art, civilization, culture. We feel individually all the burden of our present way of living; we see that were this order of things to continue, it would inevitably ruin us; and yet we are anxious to have these conditions continue, to have our science, our art, our civilization, and culture remain unchanged. It is as though a man who dwells in an old house, suffering from cold and discomfort, who is moreover aware that its walls may tumble at any moment, should consent to the remodeling of it, only on condition that he may be allowed to remain there, a condition that is equivalent to a refusal to have his dwelling rebuilt. "What, if I should leave my house," he says, "I should be temporarily deprived of its comforts; the new house may not be built after all, or it may be constructed on a new plan, which will lack the conveniences to which I have been accustomed!" But if the materials and the workmen are ready, it is probable that the new house will be built, and in a better manner than the old

one; while it is not only probable but certain that the old house will soon fall into ruins, crushing those who remain within its walls. In order that the old, everyday conditions of life may disappear and make room for new and better ones, we must surely leave behind the old conditions, which are at length become fatal and impossible, and issue forth to meet the future.

"But science, art, civilization, and culture will cease to be!" But if all these are only diverse manifestations of truth, the impending change is to be accomplished for the sake of a further advance toward truth and its realization. "How, then, can the manifestations of truth disappear, in consequence of further realization of truth?" The manifestations of truth will be different, better, loftier, the error that has been in them will perish, while the verity that is in them will remain and flourish with renewed vigor.

Return to yourselves, sons of men, and have faith in the gospel, and in its doctrine of eternal happiness! If you heed not this warning, you shall all perish like the men slain by Pilate, like those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell; like millions of other men, who slew and were slain, who executed and suffered execution, who tortured and were tortured; as perished the man who so foolishly filled his granaries, counting on a long life, on the very night when his soul was required of him. Return, sons of men, and believe in the words which Christ uttered 1800 years ago, words which He repeats to-day with greater force, warning us that the evil day He foretold is at hand, and that our life has reached its last descent of folly and wickedness.

Now, after so many centuries of futile effort to protect ourselves by the methods of the pagan system of violence, it should be evident to every man that all such effort, far from insuring our safety, tends only to add a new element of danger both to individual and social existence.

No matter by what names we may be called, nor what garments we may wear, nor in the presence of what priest we may be anointed, nor how many millions our

subjects may number, nor how many guards may be posted on our journey, nor how many policemen may protect our property, nor how many so-called criminals, revolutionists, or anarchists we may execute; no matter what exploits we may perform, nor what states we may establish, nor what fortresses and towers we may erect, from the Tower of Babel to the Eiffel Tower, — we have before us two ever present and unavoidable conditions, that deprive our mode of life of all significance: (1) death, that may overtake each of us at any moment, and (2) the transitory nature of all our undertakings, that disappear, leaving no trace behind them. No matter what we may do, found kingdoms, build palaces and monuments, write poems and songs, — all is but fleeting and leaves no trace behind. Therefore no matter how much we may attempt to conceal this from ourselves, we cannot fail to perceive that the true significance of our life lies neither in our individual, physical existence, subjected to unavoidable suffering and death, nor in any institution or social organization.

Whoever you are, you who read these lines, reflect upon your position and your duties, not upon the position of landowner, merchant, judge, emperor, president, minister, priest, or soldier, which you may assume but for a time, not upon the imaginary duties which these positions impose upon you, but upon your actual and eternal position as a being, who, after a whole eternity of non-existence, is called by the will of Some One from unconsciousness into life, and who may at any moment return whence he came by the same will. Consider your duties! Not your imaginary duties of landowner in regard to your estate, nor of merchant to your capital, nor of emperor, minister, or governor to the State, but of your real duties, of a being called forth into life and endowed with love and reason. Do that which He who has sent you into this world, and to whom you will shortly return, demands of you. Are you doing what he requires? Are you doing right when, as landowner or manufacturer, you take the products of the labor of the poor, and establish your life on this spoliation;

or when, as governor or judge, you do violence in condemning men to death; or when, as soldier, you prepare for war, for fighting, robbery, and murder, — are you doing right?

You say that the world is as you find it, that it is inevitable that it should be as it is, that what you do you are compelled to do. But can it be that, having so strongly rooted an aversion to the suffering of men, to violence, to murder; having such a need of loving your fellow-men, and of being loved by them; seeing clearly, too, that the greatest good possible to men comes from acknowledging human brotherhood, from one serving another: can it be that your heart tells you all this, that you are taught it by your reason, that science repeats it to you, and yet regardless of it, on the strength of some mysterious and complicated argument, you are forced to contradict it all in your daily conduct? Is it possible that, being a landowner or a capitalist, you should establish your life on the oppression of the people; that, being an emperor or a president, you should command armies, and be a leader of murderers; that, being a functionary of State, you should take from the poor their hard-earned money for your own benefit, or for the benefit of the rich; that, being a judge or juror, you should condemn erring men to torture and death, because the truth has not been revealed to them; or, above all, is it possible that you, a youth, should enter the army, doing that upon which all the evil of the world is founded, that, renouncing your own will, all your human sympathy, you should engage at the will of others to murder those whom they bid you murder?

It is impossible!

If you are told that all this is essential for the support of the existing system of life; that this system, with its pauperism, famine, prisons, executions, armies, wars, is necessary for society, and that if it were to be abolished worse evils would follow, you are told so only by those who benefit by this system; while those who suffer from it, — and their numbers are ten times greater, — all think and say the opposite. And at the bottom

of your heart you know that this is false, — that the existing system has had its day, and must inevitably be remodeled on new foundations; and that there is no need whatsoever to support it by the sacrifice of human life.

Even supposing that the existing system is necessary, how is it that you should have to support it by trampling upon all finer feelings? But who has made you a guardian of this crumbling structure? Neither has the State, nor society, nor has any one requested you individually to support it by occupying your position of landowner, merchant, emperor, priest, or soldier, and you are well aware that you have accepted and are holding it, not for purposes of self-denial, for the good of your fellow-men, but for your own selfish interest; for your greed of gain, vainglory, ambition, through your indolence or your cowardice. If you do not desire this position you should not persist in doing what is cruel, false, and contemptible in order to retain it. If you would once refrain from these things which you do continually for the purpose of retaining it, you would lose it at once. If you are a ruler or an official, make only an attempt to cease polite lying, cease to take part in violences and executions; if you are a priest, desist from deceiving; if a soldier, cease killing; if a landowner or manufacturer, cease defending your property by roguery and violence; and forthwith you will lose the position which, as you say, is forced upon you and seems to you burdensome.

It cannot be that a man should be placed against his will in a position contrary to conscience.

If you are put in such a position, it is not because it is necessary for some one to be there, but only because you are willing to accept it. And therefore, knowing that such a position is directly opposed to the mandates of your heart, your reason, your faith, and even to the teaching of that science you believe in, you cannot but pause to consider, if you wish to keep it, and especially if you try to justify it, if you are doing what you ought to do.

You might run the risk if you had but the time to see

your mistake and correct it, and if you ran the risk for something worth having. But when you know for certain that you are liable to die at any moment, without the slightest possibility either for yourself or for those whom you have drawn in with you of rectifying your mistake; and, moreover, since you know that no matter what those about you may accomplish in the material organization of the world, it will all very shortly disappear as certainly as you yourself, leaving no trace behind, — it is surely obvious that you have no inducement to run the risk of making a mistake so terrible.

This would seem perfectly plain and simple if we did not veil with hypocrisy the truth that is indubitably revealed to us.

Share what you have with others; do not amass riches; be not vain; do not rob, torture, or murder men; do not to others what you would not that others should do to you, — these things have been said not eighteen hundred but five thousand years ago, and there can be no doubt of the truth of them. Save for hypocrisy, it would be impossible, even if one did not obey these rules, not to acknowledge that they ought to be obeyed, and that those who do not obey them do wrong.

But you say that there is still the general well-being, for the sake of which one should deviate from these rules. It is allowable for the general well-being to kill, torture, and rob. "It is better that one man should perish than a whole nation," you say, like Caiaphas, when you are signing death-warrants; or you load your gun to shoot your fellow-man, who is to perish for the general good; or you imprison him or take away his goods.

You say that you do these cruel things because you are a part of society, of the State, and must serve your government and carry out its laws, as landowner, judge, emperor, or soldier. But if you are a part of the State and have duties in consequence, you are also a partaker of the infinite life of God's universe, and have higher duties in consequence of that.

As your duties to your family or to society are always subject to the higher duties that depend upon your citizenship in the State, so your duties of citizenship are subject to the duties arising from your relations to the life of the universe, from your sonship to God. And as it would be unwise to cut down telegraph poles in order to furnish fuel for the benefit of a family or a few people, because this would be breaking the laws that protect the welfare of the State; so it is equally unwise, in order to promote the welfare of the State, to execute or murder a man, because this is breaking the immutable laws which preserve the welfare of the world.

The obligations of citizenship must be subject to the higher and eternal obligations on your part in the everlasting life of God, and must not contradict them. As it was said eighteen hundred years ago by the disciples of Christ, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."¹ "We ought to obey God rather than men."²

You are told to believe that in order to maintain an ever changing system, established but yesterday by a few men in a corner of the globe, you should commit violent deeds that are against the fixed and eternal order established by God or reason. Can it be possible?

Do not fail, then, to reflect upon your position of landowner, merchant, judge, emperor, president, minister, priest, or soldier—associated with violence, oppression, deceit, torture, and murder; refuse to recognize the lawfulness of these crimes. I do not mean that if you are a landowner you should forthwith give your land to the poor; or if a capitalist, your money or your factory to your workmen; or if a czar, a minister, a magistrate, a judge, or a general, you should forthwith abdicate all your advantages; or if a soldier, whose occupation in its very nature is based on violence, you should at once refuse to continue longer a soldier, despite all the dangers of such a refusal. Should you do this, it will indeed be an heroic act; but it may happen—and most probably—that you will not be able to do it. You

¹ Acts iv. 19.

² Acts v. 29.

have connections, a family, subordinates, chiefs; you may be surrounded by temptations so strong that you cannot overcome them; but to acknowledge the truth to be the truth, and not to lie—that you are always able to do. You can refrain from affirming that you continue to be a landowner or factory-owner, a merchant, an artist, an author, because you are thus useful to men; from declaring that you are a governor, an attorney-general, a czar, not because it is agreeable or you are accustomed to be such, but for the good of men; from saying that you remain a soldier, not through fear of punishment, but because you consider the army indispensable for the protection of men's lives. To keep from speaking thus falsely before yourself and others—this you are always able to do, and not only able, but in duty bound to do, because in this alone—in freeing yourself from falsehood and in working out the truth—lies the highest duty of your life. And do but this and it will be sufficient for the situation to change at once of itself.

One only thing in which you are free and all-powerful has been given you; all others are beyond you. It is this,—to know the truth and to profess it. And it is only because of other miserable and erring men like yourself that you have become a soldier, an emperor, a landowner, a capitalist, a priest, or a general; that you commit evil deeds so obviously contrary to the dictates of your heart and reason; that you torture, rob, and murder men, establishing your life on their sufferings; and that, above all, instead of performing your paramount duty of acknowledging and professing the truth which is known to you, you pretend not to know it, concealing it from yourself and others, doing the very opposite of what you have been called to do.

And under what conditions are you doing this? Being liable to die at any moment, you sign a death-warrant, declare war or take part in it, pass judgment, torture and rob workmen, live in luxury surrounded by misery, and teach weak and trusting men that all this is right and for you is a matter of duty, while all the time you are in danger of your life being destroyed by a bullet or

a bacillus, and you may be deprived forever of the power to rectify or counteract the evil you have done to others and to yourself ; having wasted a life given you but once in all eternity, having left undone in it the one thing for which it was given you.

No matter how trite it may appear to state it, nor how we may hypocritically deceive ourselves, nothing can destroy the certainty of the simple and obvious truth that external conditions can never render safe this life of ours, so fraught with unavoidable suffering, and ended infallibly by death, that human life can have no other meaning than the constant fulfilment of that for which the Almighty Power has sent us here, and for which He has given us one sure guide in this life, namely, our conscious reason.

This Power does not require from us what is unreasonable and impossible,—the organization of our temporal, material life, the life of society, or of the State. He demands of us only what is reasonable and possible,—to serve the Kingdom of God, which establishes the unity of mankind, a unity possible only in the truth ; to recognize and profess the truth revealed to us, which it is always in our power to do.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you.”¹

The only significance of life consists in helping to establish the Kingdom of God ; and this can be done only by means of the acknowledgment and profession of the truth by each one of us. “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation : neither shall they say, Lo here ! or, lo there ! for, behold the kingdom of God is within you.”²

¹ Matt. vi. 33.

² Luke xvii. 20, 21.

LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ

XX

WHAT IS ART?

WHAT IS RELIGION?



HOUSE OF COUNT L. N. TOLSTOÏ IN MOSCOW.

WHAT IS ART?

WHAT IS RELIGION?

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INTRODUCTION

IN answer to the question, "What is Art?" Count Tolstoï analyzes and tests the various definitions of Art given by other writers. He shows up with merciless severity what he considers the fallacy in the popular delusion that the fetish of Art pardons bestiality, obscenity, and whatever conduces to stimulating the passions. The work is strongly controversial, and attacks unsparingly many current conceptions, as, for instance, that "Art is the manifestation of some mysterious idea of God," or "the expression of man's emotions by external signs," or the production of pleasing objects.

Tolstoï believes that Art has a loftier function. He proceeds elaborately to argue in favor of a universal activity, a union among men so that they may have the same noble feelings, and may progress together toward individual and general well-being. "Art for art's sake" is meaningless to him.

It is interesting to notice that the most original and independent of the French critics has recently taken practically the same ground in a lecture, in which he asserts that it is the critic's business to test Art and Literature, and that Art has a most intimate relation with morality.

The discussion of "What is Religion?" will be found to bear more than a literary or ethical interest, when the late disagreement between Tolstoï and the Russian Church is recalled to mind. Here he sets forth the tenets of his own broad creed. He defines Religion as "the establishment by man of such a relation to the Infinite Life around him, as, while connecting his life with this Infinitude and directing his conduct, is also in agreement with his reason and with human knowledge."

INTRODUCTION

Upon this basis of a religion founded upon reason he stands flatly, although such position has often been found shifting sands. "Reason was termed the source of error," he says again, "and the Gospel was interpreted not as common sense demands, but as those who composed the Church desired." Nevertheless, in view of his present beliefs, which question many of the fundamental truths of the Bible, one does not see how his Church could avoid refusing him the sacrament; for he follows Voltaire at more than one point, while yet adhering to the "true religion, that is, a true relation to the source of all, — God."

Of scarcely less import, though a much shorter article, is the succeeding paper "On Religious Tolerance." Here he sounds the note of the prophet — and the iconoclast. Then come a score of essays and letters, not one of which is without its interest. Nearly all of them are of theological trend. We cannot give the bent of his mind better than by quoting once more from the author, where he takes issue with Coleridge and says: "I began by loving my Orthodox faith more than my peace; then I loved Christianity more than my Church; and now I love the Truth more than anything in the world. And until now the Truth coincides for me with Christianity as I understand it; and I profess this Christianity, and in that measure in which I do profess it I peacefully and joyously live and peacefully and joyously am approaching death."

The various translations are in each case authorized. Mr. Aylmer Maude, translator of "What is Art?" has had the benefit of the author's suggestions in regard to certain points. The other essays were translated by V. Tchertkoff and A. C. Fifield.

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WHAT IS ART?

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE fundamental thought expressed in this book leads inevitably to conclusions so new, so unexpected, and so contrary to what is usually maintained in literary and artistic circles, that although it is clearly and emphatically expressed (and this I hope has not been lost in translation), most readers who wish to possess themselves of it will have to read the work carefully, and to digest it slowly.

Especially the introductory Chapters II., III., IV., and V., need careful perusal by any who, having adopted one or other of the current theories on beauty and art, may find it difficult to abandon a preconceived view, and to clear their minds for a fair appreciation of what is new to them.

The first four chapters raise the problem, and tell us briefly what has been said by previous writers. Chapter III. gives (in highly condensed form) the substance of the teaching of some sixty philosophers on this subject, and since many of them were extremely confused, the chapter cannot, in the nature of things, be easy reading.

I should like to remark, in passing, that though Tolstōi in this chapter (presumably for convenience of verification) refers chiefly to the compilations of Schasler, Kralik, and Knight, he has gone behind these authorities to the primary sources. To give a single instance: in the paragraph on Darwin, the foot-note refers us to Knight, but the remark that the origin of the art of music may be traced back to the call of the males to the females in the animal world will be found in Darwin, but will not be found in Knight.

In Chapter V. we come to Tolstōi's definition of art,

which definition should be kept well in mind while reading the rest of the book.

No doubt most of those to whom it is an end in itself, who live by it, or make it their chief occupation, will read this book (or leave it unread) and go on in their former way, much as Pharaoh, of old, hardened his heart, and did not sympathize with what Moses had to say on the labor question. But for those of us who have felt that art is too valuable a matter to be lost out of our lives, and who, in their quest for social justice, have met the reproach that they were sacrificing the pleasures and advantages of art, this book is of inestimable value, in that it solves a perplexed question of far-reaching importance to practical life.

To this class of readers neither the masterly elucidation of the former theories contained in the opening chapters, nor the explanation of how it has come about that such great importance is attached to the activity we call art (Chapters VI. and VII.), nor the explanation and illustrations of the perversion that art has undergone, nor even the elucidation of the terrible evils this perversion is producing (XVII.), will equal in significance the remaining chapters of the book. These show us what to look for in art, how to distinguish it from counterfeits (XV., XVI., and XVIII.), treat of the true art of the future (XIX.), and explain how science and art are linked together in man's life, are directed by his perception of the meaning of life, and inevitably react on all he thinks and feels.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS book of mine, "What is Art?" appears now for the first time in its true form. More than one edition has already been issued in Russia, but in each case it has been so mutilated by the "Censor," that I request all who are interested in my views on art only to judge of them by the work in its present shape. The causes which led to the publication of the book—with my name attached to it—in a mutilated form were the following: In accordance with a decision I arrived at long ago,—not to submit my writings to the "Censorship" (which I consider to be an immoral and irrational institution), but to print them only in the shape in which they were written,—I intended not to attempt to print this work in Russia. However, my good acquaintance, Professor Grote, editor of a Moscow psychological magazine, having heard of the contents of my work, asked me to print it in his magazine, and promised me that he would get the book through the "Censor's" office un mutilated if I would but agree to a few very unimportant alterations, merely toning down certain expressions. I was weak enough to agree to this, and it has resulted in a book appearing under my name, from which not only have some essential thoughts been excluded, but into which the thoughts of other men—even thoughts utterly opposed to my own convictions—have been introduced.

The thing occurred in this way. First, Grote softened my expressions, and in some cases weakened them. For instance, he replaced the words: *always* by *sometimes*, *all* by *some*, *Church religion* by *Roman Catholic religion*, "*Mother of God*" by *Madonna*, *patriotism* by *pseudo-patriotism*, *palaces* by *palatii*,¹ etc., and I did not consider

¹ Tolstoy's remarks on Church religion were re-worded so as to seem to relate only to the Western Church, and his disapproval of luxurious life was made to apply, not, say, to Queen Victoria or Nicholas II., but to the Cæsars or the Pharaohs. —Tr.

it necessary to protest. But when the book was already in type, the Censor required that whole sentences should be altered, and that instead of what I said about the evil of landed property, a remark should be substituted on the evils of a landless proletariat.¹ I agreed to this also, and to some further alterations. It seemed not worth while to upset the whole affair for the sake of one sentence, and when one alteration had been agreed to it seemed not worth while to protest against a second and a third. So, little by little, expressions crept into the book which altered the sense and attributed things to me that I could not have wished to say. So that by the time the book was printed it had been deprived of some part of its integrity and sincerity. But there was consolation in the thought that the book, even in this form, if it contains something that is good, would be of use to Russian readers whom it would otherwise not have reached. Things, however, turned out otherwise. *Nous comptions sans notre hôte*. After the legal term of four days had already elapsed, the book was seized, and, on instructions received from Petersburg, it was handed over to the "Spiritual Censor." Then Grote declined all further participation in the affair, and the "Spiritual Censor" proceeded to do what he would with the book. The "Spiritual Censorship" is one of the most ignorant, venal, stupid, and despotic institutions in Russia. Books which disagree in any way with the recognized state religion of Russia, if once it gets hold of them, are almost always totally suppressed and burnt; which is what happened to all my religious works when attempts were made to print them in Russia. Probably a similar fate would have overtaken this work also, had not the editors

¹ The Russian peasant is usually a member of a village commune, and has therefore a right to a share in the land belonging to the village. Tolstói disapproves of the order of society which allows less land for the support of a village full of people than is sometimes owned by a single landed proprietor. The "Censor" will not allow disapproval of this state of things to be expressed, but is prepared to admit that the laws and customs, say, of England — where a yet more extreme form of landed property exists, and the men who actually labor on the land usually possess none of it — deserve criticism. — TR.

of the magazine employed all means to save it. The result of their efforts was that the "Spiritual Censor," a priest who probably understands art and is interested in art as much as I understand or am interested in church services, but who gets a good salary for destroying whatever is likely to displease his superiors, struck out all that seemed to him to endanger his position, and substituted his thoughts for mine wherever he considered it necessary to do so. For instance, where I speak of Christ going to the Cross for the sake of the truth He professed, the "Censor" substituted a statement that Christ died for mankind, *i.e.* he attributed to me an assertion of the dogma of the Redemption, which I consider to be one of the most untrue and harmful of Church dogmas. After correcting the book in this way, the "Spiritual Censor" allowed it to be printed.

To protest in Russia is impossible—no newspaper would publish such a protest; and to withdraw my book from the magazine, and place the editor in an awkward position with the public, was also not possible.

So the matter has remained. A book has appeared under my name containing thoughts attributed to me which are not mine.

I was persuaded to give my article to a Russian magazine in order that my thoughts, which may be useful, should become the possession of Russian readers; and the result has been that my name is affixed to a work from which it might be assumed that I quite arbitrarily assert things contrary to the general opinion, without adducing my reasons; that I only consider false patriotism bad, but patriotism in general a very good feeling; that I merely deny the absurdities of the Roman Catholic Church and disbelieve in the Madonna, but that I believe in the Orthodox Eastern faith and in the "Mother of God"; that I consider all the writings collected in the Bible to be holy books, and see the chief importance of Christ's life in the Redemption of mankind by His death.

I have narrated all this in such detail because it strikingly illustrates the indubitable truth that all compromise

with institutions of which your conscience disapproves, — compromises which are usually made for the sake of the general good, — instead of producing the good you expected, inevitably lead you, not only to acknowledge the institution you disapprove of, but also to participate in the evil that institution produces.

I am glad to be able by this statement at least to do something to correct the error into which I was led by my compromise.

I have also to mention that besides reinstating the parts excluded by the Censor from the Russian editions, other corrections and additions of importance have been made in this edition.

29th March, 1898.

WHAT IS ART?

CHAPTER I

TAKE up any one of our ordinary newspapers, and you will find a part devoted to the theater and music. In almost every number you will find a description of some art exhibition, or of some particular picture, and you will always find reviews of new works of art that have appeared, of volumes of poems, of short stories, or of novels.

Promptly, and in detail, as soon as it has occurred, an account is published of how such and such an actress or actor played this or that rôle in such and such a drama, comedy, or opera ; and of the merits of the performance, as well as of the contents of the new drama, comedy, or opera, with its defects and merits. With as much care and detail, or even more, we are told how such and such an artist has sung a certain piece, or has played it on the piano or violin, and what were the merits and defects of the piece and of the performance. In every large town there is sure to be at least one, if not more than one, exhibition of new pictures, the merits and defects of which are discussed in the utmost detail by critics and connoisseurs.

New novels and poems, in separate volumes or in the magazines, appear almost every day, and the newspapers consider it their duty to give their readers detailed accounts of these artistic productions.

For the support of art in Russia (where for the education of the people only a hundredth part is spent of what would be required to give every one the opportunity of instruction) the government grants millions of roubles in subsidies to academies, conservatoires, and theaters. In

France twenty million francs are assigned for art, and similar grants are made in Germany and England.

In every large town enormous buildings are erected for museums, academies, conservatoires, dramatic schools, and for performances and concerts. Hundreds of thousands of workmen — carpenters, masons, painters, joiners, paperhangers, tailors, hairdressers, jewelers, molders, type-setters — spend their whole lives in hard labor to satisfy the demands of art, so that hardly any other department of human activity, except the military, consumes so much energy as this.

Not only is enormous labor spent on this activity, but in it, as in war, the very lives of men are sacrificed. Hundreds of thousands of people devote their lives from childhood to learning to twirl their legs rapidly (dancers), or to touch notes and strings very rapidly (musicians), or to draw with paint and represent what they see (artists), or to turn every phrase inside out and find a rhyme to every word. And these people, often very kind and clever, and capable of all sorts of useful labor, grow savage over their specialized and stupefying occupations, and become one-sided and self-complacent specialists, dull to all the serious phenomena of life, and skilful only at rapidly twisting their legs, their tongues, or their fingers.

But even this stunting of human life is not the worst. I remember being once at the rehearsal of one of the most ordinary of the new operas which are produced at all the opera houses of Europe and America.

I arrived when the first act had already commenced. To reach the auditorium I had to pass through the stage entrance. By dark entrances and passages, I was led through the vaults of an enormous building, past immense machines for changing the scenery and for illuminating; and there in the gloom and dust I saw workmen busily engaged. One of these men, pale, haggard, in a dirty blouse, with dirty, work-worn hands and cramped fingers, evidently tired and out of humor, went past me, angrily scolding another man. Ascending by a dark stair, I came out on the boards behind the scenes. Amid

various poles and rings and scattered scenery, decorations and curtains, stood and moved dozens, if not hundreds, of painted and dressed-up men, in costumes fitting tight to their thighs and calves, and also women, as usual, as nearly nude as might be. These were all singers, or members of the chorus, or ballet-dancers, awaiting their turns. My guide led me across the stage and, by means of a bridge of boards across the orchestra (in which perhaps a hundred musicians of all kinds, from kettledrum to flute and harp, were seated), to the dark pit-stalls.

On an elevation, between two lamps with reflectors, and in an arm-chair placed before a music-stand, sat the director of the musical part, *bâton* in hand, managing the orchestra and singers, and, in general, the production of the whole opera.

The performance had already commenced, and on the stage a procession of Indians who had brought home a bride was being presented. Besides men and women in costume, two other men in ordinary clothes bustled and ran about on the stage; one was the director of the dramatic part, and the other, who stepped about in soft shoes and ran from place to place with unusual agility, was the dancing-master, whose salary per month exceeded what ten laborers earn in a year.

These three directors arranged the singing, the orchestra, and the procession. The procession, as usual, was enacted by couples, with tinfoil halberds on their shoulders. They all came from one place, and walked round and round again, and then stopped. The procession took a long time to arrange: first the Indians with halberds came on too late; then too soon; then at the right time, but crowded together at the exit; then they did not crowd, but arranged themselves badly at the sides of the stage; and each time the whole performance was stopped and recommenced from the beginning. The procession was introduced by a recitative, delivered by a man dressed up like some variety of Turk, who, opening his mouth in a curious way, sang, "Home I bring the bri-i-ide." He sings and waves his arm (which is of course bare) from under his mantle. The procession com-

mences, but here the French horn, in the accompaniment of the recitative, does something wrong; and the director, with a shudder as if some catastrophe had occurred, raps with his stick on the stand. All is stopped, and the director, turning to the orchestra, attacks the French horn, scolding him in the rudest terms, as cabmen abuse each other, for taking the wrong note. And again the whole thing recommences. The Indians with their halberds again come on, treading softly in their extraordinary boots; again the singer sings, "Home I bring the bri-i-ide." But here the pairs get too close together. More raps with the stick, more scolding, and a recommencement. Again, "Home I bring the bri-i-ide," again the same gesticulation with the bare arm from under the mantle, and again the couples, treading softly with halberds on their shoulders, some with sad and serious faces, some talking and smiling, arrange themselves in a circle and begin to sing. All seems to be going well, but again the stick raps, and the director, in a distressed and angry voice, begins to scold the men and women of the chorus. It appears that when singing they had omitted to raise their hands from time to time in sign of animation. "Are you all dead, or what? Cows that you are! Are you corpses, that you can't move?" Again they recommence, "Home I bring the bri-i-ide," and again, with sorrowful faces, the chorus-women sing, first one and then another of them raising their hands. But two chorus-girls speak to each other, — again a more vehement rapping with the stick. "Have you come here to talk? Can't you gossip at home? You there in red breeches, come nearer. Look toward me! Recommence!" Again, "Home I bring the bri-i-ide." And so it goes on for one, two, three hours. The whole of such a rehearsal lasts six hours on end. Raps with the stick, repetitions, placings, corrections of the singers, of the orchestra, of the procession, of the dancers, — all seasoned with angry scolding. I heard the words, "asses," "fools," "idiots," "swine," addressed to the musicians and singers at least forty times in the course of one hour. And the unhappy individual to whom the

abuse is addressed, — flautist, horn-blower, or singer, — physically and mentally demoralized, does not reply, and does what is demanded of him. Twenty times is repeated the one phrase, “Home I bring the bri-i-ide,” and twenty times the striding about in yellow shoes with a halberd over the shoulder. The conductor knows that these people are so demoralized that they are no longer fit for anything but to blow trumpets and walk about with halberds and in yellow shoes, and that they are also accustomed to dainty, easy living, so that they will put up with anything rather than lose their luxurious life. He therefore gives free vent to his churlishness, especially as he has seen the same thing done in Paris and Vienna, and knows that this is the way the best conductors behave, and that it is a musical tradition of great artists to be so carried away by the great business of their art that they cannot pause to consider the feelings of other artists.

It would be difficult to find a more repulsive sight. I have seen one workman abuse another for not supporting the weight piled upon him when goods were being unloaded, or, at hay-stacking, the village elder scold a peasant for not making the rick right, and the man submitted in silence. And, however unpleasant it was to witness the scene, the unpleasantness was lessened by the consciousness that the business in hand was needful and important, and that the fault for which the head man scolded the laborer was one which might spoil a needful undertaking.

But what was being done here? For what, and for whom? Very likely the conductor was tired out, like the workman I passed in the vaults; it was even evident that he was; but who made him tire himself? And for what was he tiring himself? The opera he was rehearsing was one of the most ordinary of operas for people who are accustomed to them, but also one of the most gigantic absurdities that could possibly be devised. An Indian king wants to marry; they bring him a bride; he disguises himself as a minstrel; the bride falls in love with the minstrel and is in de-

spair, but afterwards discovers that the minstrel is the king, and every one is highly delighted.

That there never were, or could be, such Indians, and that they were not only unlike Indians, but that what they were doing was unlike anything on earth except other operas, was beyond all manner of doubt; that people do not converse in such a way as recitative, and do not place themselves at fixed distances, in a quartet, waving their arms to express their emotions; that nowhere, except in theaters, do people walk about in such a manner, in pairs, with tinfoil halberds and in slippers; that no one ever gets angry in such a way, or is affected in such a way, or laughs in such a way, or cries in such a way; and that no one on earth can be moved by such performances; all this is beyond the possibility of doubt.

Instinctively the question presents itself: For whom is this being done? Whom *can* it please? If there are, occasionally, good melodies in the opera, to which it is pleasant to listen, they could have been sung simply, without these stupid costumes and all the processions and recitatives and hand-wavings.

The ballet, in which half-naked women make voluptuous movements, twisting themselves into various sensual wreathings, is simply a lewd performance.

So one is quite at a loss as to whom these things are done for. The man of culture is heartily sick of them, while to a real working-man they are utterly incomprehensible. If any one can be pleased by these things (which is doubtful), it can only be some young footman or depraved artisan, who has contracted the spirit of the upper classes but is not yet satiated with their amusements, and wishes to show his breeding.

And all this nasty folly is prepared, not simply, nor with kindly merriment, but with anger and brutal cruelty.

It is said that it is all done for the sake of art, and that art is a very important thing. But is it true that art is so important that such sacrifices should be made for its sake? This question is especially urgent, be-

cause art, for the sake of which the labor of millions, the lives of men, and, above all, love between man and man, are being sacrificed, — this very art is becoming something more and more vague and uncertain to human perception.

Criticism, in which the lovers of art used to find support for their opinions, has latterly become so self-contradictory, that, if we exclude from the domain of art all that to which the critics of various schools themselves deny the title, there is scarcely any art left.

The artists of various sects, like the theologians of the various sects, mutually exclude and destroy themselves. Listen to the artists of the schools of our times, and you will find, in all branches, each set of artists disowning others. In poetry the old romanticists deny the *parnassiens* and the *decadents*; the *parnassiens* disown the romanticists and the *decadents*; the *decadents* disown all their predecessors and the symbolists; the symbolists disown all their predecessors and *les mages*; and *les mages* disown all, all their predecessors. Among novelists we have naturalists, psychologists, and “nature-ists,” all rejecting each other. And it is the same in dramatic art, in painting, and in music. So that art, which demands such tremendous labor-sacrifices from the people, which stunts human lives and transgresses against human love, is not only *not* a thing clearly and firmly defined, but is understood in such contradictory ways by its own devotees that it is difficult to say what is meant by art, and especially what is good, useful art, — art for the sake of which we might condone such sacrifices as are being offered at its shrine.

CHAPTER II

FOR the production of every ballet, circus, opera, operetta, exhibition, picture, concert, or printed book, the intense and unwilling labor of thousands and thousands of people is needed at what is often harmful and

humiliating work. It were well if artists made all they require for themselves, but, as it is, they all need the help of workmen, not only to produce art, but also for their own usually luxurious maintenance. And, one way or other, they get it; either through payments from rich people, or through subsidies given by government (in Russia, for instance, in grants of millions of roubles to theaters, conservatoires, and academies). This money is collected from the people, some of whom have to sell their only cow to pay the tax, and who never get those æsthetic pleasures which art gives.

It was all very well for a Greek or Roman artist, or even for a Russian artist of the first half of our century (when there were still slaves, and it was considered right that there should be), with a quiet mind to make people serve him and his art; but in our day, when in all men there is at least some dim perception of the equal rights of all, it is impossible to constrain people to labor unwillingly for art, without first deciding the question whether it is true that art is so good and so important an affair as to redeem this evil.

If not, we have the terrible probability to consider, that while fearful sacrifices of the labor and lives of men, and of morality itself, are being made to art, that same art may be not only useless but even harmful.

And therefore it is necessary for a society in which works of art arise and are supported, to find out whether all that professes to be art is really art; whether (as is presupposed in our society) all that which is art is good; and whether it is important and worth those sacrifices which it necessitates. It is still more necessary for every conscientious artist to know this, that he may be sure that all he does has a valid meaning; that it is not merely an infatuation of the small circle of people among whom he lives which excites in him the false assurance that he is doing a good work; and that what he takes from others for the support of his often very luxurious life, will be compensated for by those productions at which he works. And that is why answers to the above questions are especially important in our time.

What is this art, which is considered so important and necessary for humanity that for its sake these sacrifices of labor, of human life, and even of goodness may be made?

"What is art? What a question! Art is architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry in all its forms," usually replies the ordinary man, the art amateur, or even the artist himself, imagining the matter about which he is talking to be perfectly clear, and uniformly understood by everybody. But in architecture, one inquires further, are there not simple buildings which are not objects of art, and buildings with artistic pretensions which are unsuccessful and ugly and therefore cannot be considered as works of art? Wherein lies the characteristic sign of a work of art?

It is the same in sculpture, in music, and in poetry. Art, in all its forms, is bounded on one side by the practically useful, and on the other by unsuccessful attempts at art. How is art to be marked off from each of these? The ordinary educated man of our circle, and even the artist who has not occupied himself especially with æsthetics, will not hesitate at this question either. He thinks the solution has been found long ago, and is well known to every one.

"Art is such activity as produces beauty," says such a man.

If art consists in that, then is a ballet or an operetta art? you inquire.

"Yes," says the ordinary man, though with some hesitation, "a good ballet or a graceful operetta is also art, in so far as it manifests beauty."

But without even asking the ordinary man what differentiates the "good" ballet and the "graceful" operetta from their opposites (a question he would have much difficulty in answering), if you ask him whether the activity of costumiers and hairdressers, who ornament the figures and faces of the women for the ballet and the operetta, is art; or the activity of Worth, the dress-maker; of scent-makers and men cooks, — then he will, in most cases, deny that their activity belongs to the sphere of art. But in this the ordinary man makes a

mistake, just because he is an ordinary man and not a specialist, and because he has not occupied himself with æsthetic questions. Had he looked into these matters, he would have seen in the great Renan's book, "Marc Aurele," a dissertation showing that the tailor's work is art, and that those who do not see in the adornment of woman an affair of the highest art are very small-minded and dull. "*C'est le grand art*," says Renan. Moreover, he would have known that in many æsthetic systems—for instance, in the æsthetics of the learned Professor Kralik, "Weltschönheit, Versuch einer allgemeinen Æsthetik, von Richard Kralik," and in "Les Problèmes de l'Esthétique Contemporaine," by Guyau—the arts of costume, of taste, and of touch are included.

"*Es Folgt nun ein Fünfblatt von Künsten, die der subjectiven Sinnlichkeit entkeimen*" (There results then a pentafoleate of arts, growing out of the subjective perceptions), says Kralik (p. 175). "*Sie sind die ästhetische Behandlung der fünf Sinne*." (They are the æsthetic treatment of the five senses.)

These five arts are the following:—

Die Kunst des Geschmacksinns—The art of the sense of taste (p. 175).

Die Kunst des Geruchsinns—The art of the sense of smell (p. 177).

Die Kunst des Tastsinns—The art of the sense of touch (p. 180).

Die Kunst des Gehörsinns—The art of the sense of hearing (p. 182).

Die Kunst des Gesichtsinns—The art of the sense of sight (p. 184).

Of the first of these—*die Kunst des Geschmacksinns*—he says: "*Man hält zwar gewöhnlich nur zwei oder höchstens drei Sinne für würdig, den Stoff künstlerischer Behandlung abzugeben, aber ich glaube nur mit bedingtem Recht. Ich will kein allzugrosses Gewicht darauf legen, dass der gemeine Sprachgebrauch manch andere Künste, wie zum Beispiel die Kochkunst kennt.*"¹

¹ Only two, or at most three, senses are generally held worthy to supply matter for artistic treatment, but I think this opinion is only con-

And further: "*Und es ist doch gewiss eine ästhetische Leistung, wenn es der Kochkunst gelingt aus einem thierischen Kadaver einen Gegenstand des Geschmacks in jedem Sinne zu machen. Der Grundsatz der Kunst des Geschmacksinns (die weiter ist als die sogenannte Kochkunst) ist also dieser: Es soll alles Geniessbare als Sinnbild einer Idee behandelt werden und in jedesmaligem Einklang zur auszudrückenden Idee.*"¹

This author, like Renan, acknowledges a *Kostümkunst* (Art of Costume) (p. 200), etc.

Such is also the opinion of the French writer, Guyau, who is highly esteemed by some authors of our day. In his book, "*Les Problèmes de l'Esthétique Contemporaine*," he speaks seriously of touch, taste, and smell as giving, or being capable of giving, æsthetic impressions: "*Si la couleur manque au toucher, il nous fournit en revanche une notion que l'œil seul ne peut nous donner, et qui a une valeur esthétique considérable, celle du doux, du soyeux, du poli. Ce qui caractérise la beauté du velours, c'est sa douceur au toucher non moins que son brillant. Dans l'idée que nous nous faisons de la beauté d'une femme, le velouté de sa peau entre comme élément essentiel.*"

"*Chacun de nous probablement avec un peu d'attention se rappellera des jouissances du goût, qui ont été de véritables jouissances esthétiques.*"² And he recounts how a glass of milk drunk by him in the mountains gave him æsthetic enjoyment.

ditionally correct. I will not lay too much stress on the fact that our common speech recognizes many other arts, as, for instance, the art of cookery.

¹ And yet it is certainly an æsthetic achievement when the art of cooking succeeds in making of an animal's corpse an object in all respects tasteful. The principle of the Art of Taste (which goes beyond the so-called Art of Cookery) is therefore this: All that is eatable should be treated as the symbol of some Idea, and always in harmony with the Idea to be expressed.

² If the sense of touch lacks color, it gives us, on the other hand, a notion which the eye alone cannot afford, and one of considerable æsthetic value, namely, that of *softness, silkiness, polish*. The beauty of velvet is characterized not less by its softness to the touch than by its luster. In the idea we form of a woman's beauty, the softness of her skin enters as an essential element.

Each of us, probably, with a little attention, can recall pleasures of taste which have been real æsthetic pleasures.

So it turns out that the conception of art, as consisting in making beauty manifest, is not at all so simple as it seemed, especially now, when in this conception of beauty are included our sensations of touch and taste and smell, as they are by the latest æsthetic writers.

But the ordinary man either does not know, or does not wish to know, all this, and is firmly convinced that all questions about art may be simply and clearly solved by acknowledging beauty to be the subject-matter of art. To him it seems clear and comprehensible that art consists in manifesting beauty, and that a reference to beauty will serve to explain all questions about art.

But what is this beauty which forms the subject-matter of art? How is it defined? What is it?

As is always the case, the more cloudy and confused the conception conveyed by a word, with the more *aplomb* and self-assurance do people use that word, pretending that what is understood by it is so simple and clear that it is not worth while even to discuss what it actually means.

This is how matters of orthodox religion are usually dealt with, and this is how people now deal with the conception of beauty. It is taken for granted that what is meant by the word beauty is known and understood by every one. And yet not only is this not known, but, after whole mountains of books have been written on the subject by the most learned and profound thinkers during one hundred and fifty years (ever since Baumgarten founded æsthetics in the year 1750), the question, What is beauty? remains to this day quite unsolved, and in each new work on æsthetics it is answered in a new way. One of the last books I read on æsthetics is a not ill-written booklet by Julius Mithalter, called "Rätsel des Schönen" (The Enigma of the Beautiful). And that title precisely expresses the position of the question, What is beauty? After thousands of learned men have discussed it during one hundred and fifty years, the meaning of the word beauty remains an enigma still. The Germans answer the question in their manner, though in a hundred different ways. The physiologist-

æstheticians, especially the Englishmen, Herbert Spencer, Grant Allen, and his school, answer it, each in his own way; the French eclectics, and the followers of Guyau and Taine, also each in his own way; and all these people know all the preceding solutions given by Baumgarten, and Kant, and Schelling, and Schiller, and Fichte, and Winckelmann, and Lessing, and Hegel, and Schopenhauer, and Hartmann, and Schasler, and Cousin, and Lévêque, and others.

What is this strange conception "beauty," which seems so simple to those who talk without thinking, but in defining which all the philosophers of various tendencies and different nationalities can come to no agreement during a century and a half? What is this conception of beauty, on which the dominant doctrine of art rests?

In Russian, by the word *krasota* (beauty) we mean only that which pleases the sight. And though latterly people have begun to speak of "an ugly deed," or of "beautiful music," it is not good Russian.

A Russian of the common folk, not knowing foreign languages, will not understand you if you tell him that a man who has given his last coat to another, or done anything similar, has acted "beautifully," that a man who has cheated another has done an "ugly" action, or that a song is "beautiful."

In Russian a deed may be kind and good, or unkind and bad. Music may be pleasant and good, or unpleasant and bad; but there can be no such thing as "beautiful" or "ugly" music.

Beautiful may relate to a man, a horse, a house, a view, or a movement. Of actions, thoughts, character, or music, if they please us, we may say that they are good, or, if they do not please us, that they are not good. But beautiful can be used only concerning that which pleases the sight. So that the word and conception "good" includes the conception of "beautiful," but the reverse is not the case; the conception "beauty" does not include the conception "good." If we say "good" of an article which we value for its appearance,

we thereby say that the article is beautiful ; but if we say it is "beautiful," it does not at all mean that the article is a good one.

Such is the meaning ascribed by the Russian language, and therefore by the sense of the people, to the words and conceptions "good" and "beautiful."

In all the European languages, *i.e.* the languages of those nations among whom the doctrine has spread that beauty is the essential thing in art, the words "beau," "schön," "beautiful," "bello," etc., while keeping their meaning of beautiful in form, have come to also express "goodness," "kindness," *i.e.* have come to act as substitutes for the word "good."

So that it has become quite natural in those languages to use such expressions as "belle ame," "schöne Gedanken," of "beautiful deed." Those languages no longer have a suitable word wherewith expressly to indicate beauty of form, and have to use a combination of words such as "beau par la forme," "beautiful to look at," etc., to convey that idea.

Observation of the divergent meanings which the words "beauty" and "beautiful" have in Russian on the one hand, and in those European languages now permeated by this æsthetic theory on the other hand, shows us that the word "beauty" has, among the latter, acquired a special meaning, namely, that of "good."

What is remarkable, moreover, is that since we Russians have begun more and more to adopt the European view of art, the same evolution has begun to show itself in our language also, and some people speak and write quite confidently, and without causing surprise, of beautiful music and ugly actions, or even thoughts ; whereas forty years ago, when I was young, the expressions "beautiful music" and "ugly actions" were not only unusual, but incomprehensible. Evidently this new meaning given to beauty by European thought begins to be assimilated by Russian society.

And what really is this meaning? What is this "beauty" as it is understood by the European peoples?

In order to answer this question, I must here quote

at least a small selection of those definitions of beauty most generally adopted in existing æsthetic systems. I especially beg the reader not to be overcome by dullness, but to read these extracts through, or, still better, to read some one of the erudite æsthetic authors. Not to mention the voluminous German æstheticians, a very good book for this purpose would be either the German book by Kralik, the English work by Knight, or the French one by Lévêque. It is necessary to read one of the learned æsthetic writers in order to form at first-hand a conception of the variety in opinion and the frightful obscurity which reigns in this region of speculation; not, in this important matter, trusting to another's report.

This, for instance, is what the German æsthetician Schasler says in the preface to his famous, voluminous, and detailed work on æsthetics:—

“Hardly in any sphere of philosophic science can we find such divergent methods of investigation and exposition, amounting even to self-contradiction, as in the sphere of æsthetics. On the one hand, we have elegant phraseology without any substance, characterized in great part by most one-sided superficiality; and on the other hand, accompanying undeniable profundity of investigation and richness of subject-matter, we get a revolting awkwardness of philosophic terminology, infolding the simplest thoughts in an apparel of abstract science, as though to render them worthy to enter the consecrated palace of the system; and finally, between these two methods of investigation and exposition there is a third, forming, as it were, the transition from one to the other, a method consisting of eclecticism, now flaunting an elegant phraseology, and now a pedantic erudition. A style of exposition that falls into none of these three defects but it is truly concrete, and, having important matter, expresses it in clear and popular philosophic language, can nowhere be found less frequently than in the domain of æsthetics.”¹

It is only necessary, for instance, to read Schasler's

¹ M. Schasler, “*Kritische Geschichte der Æsthetik*,” 1872, vol. i., p. 13.

own book to convince oneself of the justice of this observation of his.

On the same subject the French writer Véron, in the preface to his very good work on æsthetics, says: "*Il n'y a pas de science, qui ait été plus que l'esthétique livrée aux rêveries des métaphysiciens. Depuis Platon jusqu'aux doctrines officielles de nos jours, on a fait de l'art je ne sais quel amalgame de fantaisies quintessenciées, et de mystères transcendants qui trouvent leur expression suprême dans la conception absolue du Beau idéal, prototype immuable et divin des choses réelles*" ("L'Esthétique," 1878, p. 5).¹

If the reader will only be at the pains to peruse the following extracts, defining beauty, taken from the chief writers on æsthetics, he may convince himself that this censure is thoroughly deserved.

I shall not quote the definitions of beauty attributed to the ancients, — Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, etc., down to Plotinus, — because, in reality, the ancients had not that conception of beauty separated from goodness which forms the basis and aim of æsthetics in our time. By referring the judgments of the ancients on beauty to our conception of it, as is usually done in æsthetics, we give the words of the ancients a meaning which is not theirs.²

CHAPTER III

I BEGIN with the founder of æsthetics, Baumgarten (1714-1762).

According to Baumgarten,³ the object of logical

¹ There is no science which, more than æsthetics, has been handed over to the reveries of the metaphysicians. From Plato down to the received doctrines of our day, people have made of art a strange amalgam of quintessential fancies and transcendental mysteries, which find their supreme expression in the conception of an absolute ideal Beauty, immutable and divine prototype of actual things.

² See on this matter Benard's admirable book, "L'Esthétique d'Aristote," also Walter's "Geschichte der Ästhetik in Altertum."

³ Schasler, p. 361.

knowledge is Truth, the object of æsthetic (*i.e.* sensuous) knowledge is Beauty. Beauty is the Perfect (the Absolute) recognized through the senses; Truth is the Perfect perceived through reason; Goodness is the Perfect reached by moral will.

Beauty is defined by Baumgarten as a correspondence, *i.e.* an order of the parts in their mutual relations to each other and in their relation to the whole. The aim of beauty itself is to please and excite a desire, "*Wohlgefallen und Erregung eines Verlangens.*" (A position precisely the opposite of Kant's definition of the nature and sign of beauty.)

With reference to the manifestations of beauty, Baumgarten considers that the highest embodiment of beauty is seen by us in nature, and he therefore thinks that the highest aim of art is to copy nature. (This position also is directly contradicted by the conclusions of the latest æstheticians.)

Passing over the unimportant followers of Baumgarten, — Maier, Eschenburg, and Eberhard, — who only slightly modified the doctrine of their teacher by dividing the pleasant from the beautiful, I will quote the definitions given by writers who came immediately after Baumgarten, and defined beauty quite in another way. These writers were Sulzer, Mendelssohn, and Moritz. They, in contradiction to Baumgarten's main position, recognize as the aim of art, not beauty, but goodness. Thus Sulzer (1720–1777) says that only that can be considered beautiful which contains goodness. According to his theory, the aim of the whole life of humanity is welfare in social life. This is attained by the education of the moral feelings, to which end art should be subservient. Beauty is that which evokes and educates this feeling.

Beauty is understood almost in the same way by Mendelssohn (1729–1786). According to him, art is the carrying forward of the beautiful, obscurely recognized by feeling, till it becomes the true and good. The aim of art is moral perfection.¹

¹ Schasler, p. 369.

For the æstheticians of this school, the ideal of beauty is a beautiful soul in a beautiful body. So that these æstheticians completely wipe out Baumgarten's division of the Perfect (the Absolute), into the three forms of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty; and Beauty is again united with the Good and the True.

But this conception is not only not maintained by the later æstheticians, but the æsthetic doctrine of Winckelmann arises, again in complete opposition. This divides the mission of art from the aim of goodness in the sharpest and most positive manner, makes external beauty the aim of art, and even limits it to visible beauty.

According to the celebrated work of Winckelmann (1717-1767), the law and aim of all art is beauty only, beauty quite separated from and independent of goodness. There are three kinds of beauty: (1) beauty of form, (2) beauty of idea, expressing itself in the position of the figure (in plastic art), (3) beauty of expression, attainable only when the two first conditions are present. This beauty of expression is the highest aim of art, and is attained in antique art; modern art should therefore aim at imitating ancient art.¹

Art is similarly understood by Lessing, Herder, and afterwards by Goethe and by all the distinguished æstheticians of Germany till Kant, from whose day, again, a different conception of art commences.

Native æsthetic theories arose during this period in England, France, Italy, and Holland, and they, though not taken from the German, were equally cloudy and contradictory. And all these writers, just like the German æstheticians, founded their theories on a conception of the Beautiful, understanding beauty in the sense of a something existing absolutely, and more or less intermingled with Goodness or having one and the same root. In England, almost simultaneously with Baumgarten, even a little earlier, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Home, Burke, Hogarth, and others, wrote on art.

According to Shaftesbury (1670-1713), "That which is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable, what is

¹Schasler, pp. 388-390.

harmonious and proportionable is true, and what is at once both beautiful and true is of consequence agreeable and good.”¹ Beauty, he taught, is recognized by the mind only. God is fundamental beauty; beauty and goodness proceed from the same fount.

So that, although Shaftesbury regards beauty as being something separate from goodness, they again merge into something inseparable.

According to Hutcheson (1694-1747 — “Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue”), the aim of art is beauty, the essence of which consists in evoking in us the perception of uniformity amid variety. In the recognition of what is art we are guided by “an internal sense.” This internal sense may be in contradiction to the ethical one. So that, according to Hutcheson, beauty does not always correspond with goodness, but separates from it and is sometimes contrary to it.²

According to Home, Lord Kames (1696-1782), beauty is that which is pleasant. Therefore beauty is defined by taste alone. The standard of true taste is that the maximum of richness, fullness, strength, and variety of impression should be contained in the narrowest limits. That is the ideal of a perfect work of art.

According to Burke (1729-1797 — “Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful”), the sublime and beautiful, which are the aim of art, have their origin in the promptings of self-preservation and of society. These feelings, examined in their source, are means for the maintenance of the race through the individual. The first (self-preservation) is attained by nourishment, defense, and war; the second (society) by intercourse and propagation. Therefore self-defense, and war, which is bound up with it, is the source of the sublime; sociability, and the sex-instinct, which is bound up with it, is the source of beauty.³

¹ Knight, “Philosophy of the Beautiful,” i., pp. 165, 166.

² Schasler, p. 289. Knight, pp. 168, 169.

³ R. Kralik, “Weltschönheit, Versuch einer allgemeinen Ästhetik,” pp.

Such were the chief English definitions of art and beauty in the eighteenth century.

During that period, in France, the writers on art were Père André and Batteux, with Diderot, D'Alembert, and, to some extent, Voltaire, following later.

According to Père André ("Essai sur le Beau," 1741), there are three kinds of beauty, — divine beauty, natural beauty, and artificial beauty.¹

According to Batteux (1713-1780), art consists in imitating the beauty of nature, its aim being enjoyment.² Such is also Diderot's definition of art.

The French writers, like the English, consider that it is taste that decides what is beautiful. And the laws of taste are not only not laid down, but it is granted that they cannot be settled. The same view was held by D'Alembert and Voltaire.³

According to the Italian æsthetician of that period, Pagano, art consists in uniting the beauties dispersed in nature. The capacity to perceive these beauties is taste, the capacity to bring them into one whole is artistic genius. Beauty commingles with goodness, so that beauty is goodness made visible, and goodness is inner beauty.⁴

According to the opinion of other Italians: Muratori (1672-1750), — "*Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto intorno le scienze e le arti*," — and especially Spaletti,⁵ — "*Saggio sopra la bellezza*" (1765), — art amounts to an egotistical sensation, founded (as with Burke) on the desire for self-preservation and society.

Among Dutch writers, Hemsterhuis (1720-1790), who had an influence on the German æstheticians and on Goethe, is remarkable. According to him, beauty is that which gives most pleasure, and that gives most pleasure which gives us the greatest number of ideas in the shortest time. Enjoyment of the beautiful, because it gives the greatest quantity of perceptions in the shortest time, is the highest notion to which man can attain.⁶

¹ Knight, p. 101.

³ Knight, pp. 102-104.

⁶ Spaletti, Schasler, p. 328.

² Schasler, p. 316.

⁴ R. Kralik, p. 124.

⁶ Schasler, pp. 331-333.

Such were the æsthetic theories outside Germany during the last century. In Germany, after Winckelmann, there again arose a completely new æsthetic theory, that of Kant (1724-1804), which, more than all others, clears up what this conception of beauty, and consequently of art, really amounts to.

The æsthetic teaching of Kant is founded as follows: Man has a knowledge of nature outside him and of himself in nature. In nature, outside himself, he seeks for truth; in himself, he seeks for goodness. The first is an affair of pure reason, the other of practical reason (free will). Besides these two means of perception, there is yet the judging capacity (*Urteilskraft*), which forms judgments without reasonings and produces pleasure without desire (*Urtheil ohne Begriff und Vergnügen ohne Begehren*). This capacity is the basis of æsthetic feeling. Beauty, according to Kant, in its subjective meaning is that which, in general and necessarily, without reasonings and without practical advantage, pleases. In its objective meaning it is the form of a suitable object, in so far as that object is perceived without any conception of its utility.¹

Beauty is defined in the same way by the followers of Kant, among whom was Schiller (1759-1805). According to Schiller, who wrote much on æsthetics, the aim of art is, as with Kant, beauty, the source of which is pleasure without practical advantage. So that art may be called a game, not in the sense of an unimportant occupation, but in the sense of a manifestation of the beauties of life itself without other aim than that of beauty.²

Besides Schiller, the most remarkable of Kant's followers in the sphere of æsthetics was Wilhelm Humboldt, who, though he added nothing to the definition of beauty, explained various forms of it, — the drama, music, the comic, etc.³

After Kant, besides the second-rate philosophers, the writers on æsthetics were Fichte, Schelling, Hegel,

¹ Schasler, pp. 525-528.

² Knight, pp. 61-63.

³ Schasler, pp. 740-743.

and their followers. Fichte (1762-1814) says that perception of the beautiful proceeds from this: the world—*i.e.* nature—has two sides: it is the sum of our limitations, and it is the sum of our free idealistic activity. In the first aspect the world is limited, in the second aspect it is free. In the first aspect every object is limited, distorted, compressed, confined—and we see deformity; in the second we perceive its inner completeness, vitality, regeneration—and we see beauty. So that the deformity or beauty of an object, according to Fichte, depends on the point of view of the observer. Beauty therefore exists, not in the world, but in the beautiful soul (*schöner Geist*). Art is the manifestation of this beautiful soul, and its aim is the education, not only of the mind—that is the business of the *savant*, not only of the heart—that is the affair of the moral preacher, but of the whole man. And so the characteristic of beauty lies, not in anything external, but in the presence of a beautiful soul in the artist.¹

Following Fichte, and in the same direction, Friedrich Schlegel and Adam Müller also defined beauty. According to Schlegel (1772-1829), beauty in art is understood too incompletely, one-sidedly, and disconnectedly. Beauty exists, not only in art, but also in nature and in love; so that the truly beautiful is expressed by the union of art, nature, and love. Therefore, as inseparably one with æsthetic art, Schlegel acknowledges moral and philosophic art.²

According to Adam Müller (1779-1829), there are two kinds of beauty: the one, general beauty, which attracts people as the sun attracts the planet—this is found chiefly in antique art; and the other, individual beauty, which results from the observer himself becoming a sun, attracting beauty—this is the beauty of modern art. A world in which all contradictions are harmonized is the highest beauty. Every work of art is a reproduction of this universal harmony.³ The highest art is the art of life.⁴

¹ Schasler, pp. 769-771.

³ Kralik, p. 148.

² Schasler, pp. 786, 787.

⁴ Kralik, p. 820.

Next after Fichte and his followers came a contemporary of his, the philosopher Schelling (1775-1854), who has had a great influence on the æsthetic conceptions of our times. According to Schelling's philosophy, art is the production or result of that conception of things by which the subject becomes its own object, or the object its own subject. Beauty is the perception of the infinite in the finite. And the chief characteristic of works of art is unconscious infinity. Art is the uniting of the subjective with the objective, of nature with reason, of the unconscious with the conscious, and therefore art is the highest means of knowledge. Beauty is the contemplation of things in themselves as they exist in the prototype (*In den Urbildern*). It is not the artist who by his knowledge or skill produces the beautiful, but the idea of beauty in him itself produces it.¹

Of Schelling's followers the most noticeable was Solger (1780-1819 — "Vorlesungen über Æsthetik"). According to him, the idea of beauty is the fundamental idea of everything. In the world we see only distortions of the fundamental idea, but art, by imagination, may lift itself to the height of this idea. Art is therefore akin to creation.²

According to another follower of Schelling, Krause (1781-1832), true, positive beauty is the manifestation of the Idea in an individual form; art is the actualization of the beauty existing in the sphere of man's free spirit. The highest stage of art is the art of life, which directs its activity toward the adornment of life so that it may be a beautiful abode for a beautiful man.³

After Schelling and his followers came the new æsthetic doctrine of Hegel, which is held to this day, consciously by many, but by the majority unconsciously. This teaching is not only no clearer or better defined than the preceding ones, but is, if possible, even more cloudy and mystical.

¹ Schasler, pp. 828, 829, 834-841.

² Schasler, p. 891.

³ Schasler, p. 917.

According to Hegel (1770-1831), God manifests himself in nature and in art in the form of beauty. God expresses himself in two ways: in the object and in the subject, in nature and in spirit. Beauty is the shining of the Idea through matter. Only the soul, and what pertains to it, is truly beautiful; and therefore the beauty of nature is only the reflection of the natural beauty of the spirit—the beautiful has only a spiritual content. But the spiritual must appear in sensuous form. The sensuous manifestation of spirit is only appearance (*schein*), and this appearance is the only reality of the beautiful. Art is thus the production of this appearance of the Idea, and is a means, together with religion and philosophy, of bringing to consciousness and of expressing the deepest problems of humanity and the highest truths of the spirit.

Truth and beauty, according to Hegel, are one and the same thing; the difference being only that truth is the Idea itself as it exists in itself, and is thinkable. The Idea, manifested externally, becomes to the apprehension not only true but beautiful. The beautiful is the manifestation of the Idea.¹

Following Hegel came his many adherents, Weisse, Arnold Ruge, Rosenkrantz, Theodor Vischer, and others.

According to Weisse (1801-1867), art is the introduction (*Einbildung*) of the absolute spiritual reality of beauty into external, dead, indifferent matter, the perception of which latter, apart from the beauty brought into it, presents the negation of all existence in itself (*Negation alles Fürsichseins*).

In the idea of truth, Weisse explains, lies a contradiction between the subjective and the objective sides of knowledge, in that an individual *I* discerns the Universal. This contradiction can be removed by a conception that should unite into one the universal and the individual, which fall asunder in our conceptions of truth. Such a conception would be reconciled (*aufgehoben*) truth. Beauty is such a reconciled truth.²

¹ Schasler, pp. 946, 1085, 984, 985, 990.

² Schasler, pp. 966, 655, 956.

According to Ruge (1802-1880), a strict follower of Hegel, beauty is the Idea expressing itself. The spirit, contemplating itself, either finds itself expressed completely, and then that full expression of itself is beauty; or incompletely, and then it feels the need to alter this imperfect expression of itself, and becomes creative art.¹

According to Vischer (1807-1887), beauty is the Idea in the form of a finite phenomenon. The Idea itself is not indivisible, but forms a system of ideas, which may be represented by ascending and descending lines. The higher the idea, the more beauty it contains; but even the lowest contains beauty, because it forms an essential link of the system. The highest form of the Idea is personality, and therefore the highest art is that which has for its subject-matter the highest personality.²

Such were the theories of the German æstheticians in the Hegelian direction, but they did not monopolize æsthetic dissertations. In Germany, side by side and simultaneously with the Hegelian theories, there appeared theories of beauty not only independent of Hegel's position (that beauty is the manifestation of the Idea), but directly contrary to this view, denying and ridiculing it. Such was the line taken by Herbart and, more particularly, by Schopenhauer.

According to Herbart (1776-1841), there is not, and cannot be, any such thing as beauty existing in itself. What does exist is only our opinion, and it is necessary to find the base of this opinion (*Ästhetisches Elementarurtheil*). Such bases are connected with our impressions. There are certain relations which we term beautiful; and art consists in finding these relations, which are simultaneous in painting, the plastic art, and architecture, successive and simultaneous in music, and purely successive in poetry. In contradiction to the former æstheticians, Herbart holds that objects are often beautiful which express nothing at all, as, for instance, the rainbow, which is beautiful for its lines and colors, and not for its mythological connection with Iris or Noah's rainbow.³

¹ Schasler, p. 1017.

² Schasler, pp. 1065, 1066.

³ Schasler, pp. 1097-1100.

Another opponent of Hegel was Schopenhauer, who denied Hegel's whole system, his æsthetics included.

According to Schopenhauer (1788-1860), Will objectivizes itself in the world on various planes; and although the higher the plane on which it is objectivized the more beautiful it is, yet each plane has its own beauty. Renunciation of one's individuality and contemplation of one of these planes of manifestation of Will gives us a perception of beauty. All men, says Schopenhauer, possess the capacity to objectivize the Idea on different planes. The genius of the artist has this capacity in a higher degree, and therefore makes a higher beauty manifest.¹

After these more eminent writers there followed, in Germany, less original and less influential ones, such as Hartmann, Kirkmann, Schnasse, and, to some extent, Helmholtz (as an æsthetician), Bergmann, Jungmann, and an innumerable host of others.

According to Hartmann (1842), beauty lies, not in the external world, nor in "the thing in itself," neither does it reside in the soul of man, but it lies in the "seeming" (*Schein*) produced by the artist. The thing in itself is not beautiful, but is transformed into beauty by the artist.²

According to Schnasse (1798-1875), there is no perfect beauty in the world. In nature there is only an approach toward it. Art gives what nature cannot give. In the energy of the free *ego*, conscious of harmony not found in nature, beauty is disclosed.³

Kirkmann wrote on experimental æsthetics. All aspects of history in his system are joined by pure chance. Thus, according to Kirkmann (1802-1884), there are six realms of history: The realm of Knowledge, of Wealth, of Morality, of Faith, of Politics, and of Beauty; and activity in the last-named realm is art.⁴

According to Helmholtz (1821), who wrote on beauty as it relates to music, beauty in musical productions is attained only by following unalterable laws. These laws

¹ Schasler, pp. 1124, 1107.

³ Knight, p. 83.

² Knight, pp. 81, 82.

⁴ Schasler, p. 1121.

are not known to the artist ; so that beauty is manifested by the artist unconsciously, and cannot be subjected to analysis.¹

According to Bergmann (1840) ("Ueber das Schöne," 1887), to define beauty objectively is impossible. Beauty is only perceived subjectively, and therefore the problem of æsthetics is to define what pleases whom.²

According to Jungmann (d. 1885), firstly, beauty is a suprasensible quality of things ; secondly, beauty produces in us pleasure by merely being contemplated ; and, thirdly, beauty is the foundation of love.³

The æsthetic theories of the chief representatives of France, England, and other nations in recent times have been the following :—

In France, during this period, the prominent writers on æsthetics were Cousin, Jouffroy, Pictet, Ravaisson, Lévêque.

Cousin (1792–1867) was an eclectic, and a follower of the German idealists. According to his theory, beauty always has a moral foundation. He disputes the doctrine that art is imitation and that the beautiful is what pleases. He affirms that beauty may be defined objectively, and that it essentially consists in variety in unity.⁴

After Cousin came Jouffroy (1796–1842), who was a pupil of Cousin's and also a follower of the German æstheticians. According to his definition, beauty is the expression of the invisible by those natural signs which manifest it. The visible world is the garment by means of which we see beauty.⁵

The Swiss writer Pictet repeated Hegel and Plato, supposing beauty to exist in the direct and free manifestation of the divine Idea revealing itself in sense forms.⁶

Lévêque was a follower of Schelling and Hegel. He holds that beauty is something invisible behind nature—a force or spirit revealing itself in ordered energy.⁷

Similar vague opinions about the nature of beauty

¹ Knight, pp. 85, 86.

² Knight, p. 88.

³ Knight, p. 116.

⁴ Knight, pp. 123, 124.

⁵ Knight, p. 88.

⁶ Knight, p. 112.

⁷ Knight, pp. 118, 119.

were expressed by the French metaphysician Ravaisson, who considered beauty to be the ultimate aim and purpose of the world. "*La beauté la plus divine et principalement la plus parfaite contient le secret du monde.*"¹ And again, "*Le monde entier est l'œuvre d'une beauté absolue, qui n'est la cause des choses que par l'amour qu'elle met en elles.*"

I purposely abstain from translating these metaphysical expressions, because, however cloudy the Germans may be, the French, once they absorb the theories of the Germans and take to imitating them, far surpass them in uniting heterogeneous conceptions into one expression, and putting forward one meaning or another indiscriminately. For instance, the French philosopher Renouvier, when discussing beauty, says, "*Ne craignons pas de dire qu'une vérité qui ne serait pas belle, ne serait qu'un jeu logique de notre esprit et que la seule vérité solide et digne de ce nom c'est la beauté.*"²

Besides the æsthetic idealists who wrote and still write under the influence of German philosophy, the following recent writers have also influenced the comprehension of art and beauty in France: Taine, Guyau, Cherbuliez, Coster, and Véron.

According to Taine (1828-1893), beauty is the manifestation of the essential characteristic of any important idea more completely than it is expressed in reality.³

Guyau (1854-1888) taught that beauty is not something exterior to the object itself, — is not, as it were, a parasitic growth on it, — but is itself the very blossoming forth of that on which it appears. Art is the expression of reasonable and conscious life, evoking in us both the deepest consciousness of existence and the highest feelings and loftiest thoughts. Art lifts man from his personal life into the universal life by means, not only of participation in the same ideas and beliefs, but also by means of similarity in feeling.⁴

¹ "La Philosophie en France," p. 232.

² "Du Fondement de l'Induction."

³ "Philosophie de l'Art," vol. i., 1893, p. 47.

⁴ Knight, pp. 139-141.

According to Cherbuliez, art is an activity, (1) satisfying our innate love of forms (*apparences*), (2) endowing these forms with ideas, (3) affording pleasure alike to our senses, heart, and reason. Beauty is not inherent in objects, but is an act of our souls. Beauty is an illusion; there is no absolute beauty. But what we consider characteristic and harmonious appears beautiful to us.

Coster held that the ideas of the beautiful, the good, and the true are innate. These ideas illuminate our minds and are identical with God, who is Goodness, Truth, and Beauty. The idea of Beauty includes unity of essence, variety of constitutive elements, and order, which brings unity into the various manifestations of life.¹

For the sake of completeness, I will further cite some of the very latest writings upon art.

"La Psychologie du Beau et de l'Art, par Mario Pilo" (1895), says that beauty is a product of our physical feelings. The aim of art is pleasure, but this pleasure (for some reason) he considers to be necessarily highly moral.

The "Essai sur l'Art Contemporain, par Fierens Gevaert" (1897), says that art rests on its connection with the past, and on the religious ideal of the present which the artist holds when giving to his work the form of his individuality.

Then again, Sar Peladan's "L'Art Idealiste et Mystique" (1894), says that beauty is one of the manifestations of God. "*Il n'y a pas d'autre Réalité que Dieu, il n'y a pas d'autre Vérité que Dieu, il n'y a pas d'autre Beauté que Dieu*" (p. 33). This book is very fantastic and very illiterate, but is characteristic in the positions it takes up, and noticeable on account of a certain success it is having with the younger generation in France.

All the æsthetics diffused in France up to the present time are similar in kind, but among them Véron's "L'Esthétique" (1878) forms an exception, being reasonable and clear. That work, though it does not give an

¹ Knight, p. 134.

exact definition of art, at least rids æsthetics of the cloudy conception of an absolute beauty.

According to Véron (1825-1889), art is the manifestation of emotion transmitted externally by a combination of lines, forms, colors, or by a succession of movements, sounds, or words subjected to certain rhythms.¹

In England, during this period, the writers on æsthetics define beauty more and more frequently, not by its own qualities, but by taste; and the discussion about beauty is superseded by a discussion on taste.

After Reid (1704-1796), who acknowledged beauty as being entirely dependent on the spectator, Alison, in his "Essay on the Nature and Principles of Taste" (1790), proved the same thing. From another side this was also asserted by Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), the grandfather of the celebrated Charles Darwin.

He says that we consider beautiful that which is connected in our conception with what we love. Richard Knight's work, "An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste," also tends in the same direction.

Most of the English theories of æsthetics are on the same lines. The prominent writers on æsthetics in England during the present century have been Charles Darwin (to some extent), Herbert Spencer, Grant Allen, Ker, and Knight.

According to Charles Darwin (1809-1882 — "Descent of Man," 1871), beauty is a feeling natural not only to man, but also to animals, and consequently to the ancestors of man. Birds adorn their nests and esteem beauty in their mates. Beauty has an influence on marriages. Beauty includes a variety of diverse conceptions. The origin of the art of music is the call of the males to the females.²

According to Herbert Spencer (b. 1820), the origin of art is play, a thought previously expressed by Schiller. In the lower animals all the energy of life is expended in life-maintenance and race-maintenance; in man, however, there remains, after these needs are satisfied, some superfluous strength. This excess is used in play,

¹ "L'Esthétique," p. 106.

² Knight, p. 238.

which passes over into art. Play is an imitation of real activity; so is art. The sources of æsthetic pleasure are threefold: (1) That "which exercises the faculties affected in the most complete ways, with the fewest drawbacks from exercise," (2) "the difference of a stimulus in large amount, which awakens a glow of agreeable feeling," (3) the partial revival of the same, with special combinations.¹

In Todhunter's "Theory of the Beautiful" (1872), beauty is infinite loveliness, which we apprehend both by reason and by the enthusiasm of love. The recognition of beauty as being such depends on taste; there can be no criterion for it. The only approach to a definition is found in culture. (What culture is, is not defined.) Intrinsically, art—that which affects us through lines, colors, sounds, or words—is not the product of blind forces, but of reasonable ones, working, with mutual helpfulness toward a reasonable aim. Beauty is the reconciliation of contradictions.²

Grant Allen is a follower of Spencer, and in his "Physiological Æsthetics" (1877) he says that beauty has a physical origin. Æsthetic pleasures come from the contemplation of the beautiful, but the conception of beauty is obtained by a physiological process. The origin of art is play; when there is a superfluity of physical strength man gives himself to play; when there is a superfluity of receptive power man gives himself to art. The beautiful is that which affords the maximum of stimulation with the minimum of waste. Differences in the estimation of beauty proceed from taste. Taste can be educated. We must have faith in the judgments "of the finest-nurtured and most discriminative" men. These people form the taste of the next generation.³

According to Ker's "Essay on the Philosophy of Art" (1883), beauty enables us to make part of the objective world intelligible to ourselves without being troubled by reference to other parts of it, as is inevitable for science. So that art destroys the opposition between the one and

¹ Knight, pp. 239, 240.

² Knight, pp. 240-243.

³ Knight, pp. 250-252.

the many, between the law and its manifestation, between the subject and its object, by uniting them. Art is the revelation and vindication of freedom, because it is free from the darkness and incomprehensibility of finite things.¹

According to Knight's "Philosophy of the Beautiful," Part II. (1893), beauty is (as with Schelling) the union of object and subject, the drawing forth from nature of that which is cognate to man, and the recognition in oneself of that which is common to all nature.

The opinions on beauty and on art here mentioned are far from exhausting what has been written on the subject. And every day fresh writers on æsthetics arise, in whose disquisitions appear the same enchanted confusion and contradictoriness in defining beauty. Some, by inertia, continue the mystical æsthetics of Baumgarten and Hegel with sundry variations; others transfer the question to the region of subjectivity, and seek for the foundation of the beautiful in questions of taste; others — the æstheticians of the very latest formation — seek the origin of beauty in the laws of physiology; and finally, others again investigate the question quite independently of the conception of beauty. Thus Sully, in his "Sensation and Intuition: Studies in Psychology and Æsthetics" (1874), dismisses the conception of beauty altogether, art, by his definition, being the production of some permanent object or passing action fitted to supply active enjoyment to the producer, and a pleasurable impression to a number of spectators or listeners, quite apart from any personal advantage derived from it.²

CHAPTER IV

To what do these definitions of beauty amount? Not reckoning the thoroughly inaccurate definitions of beauty which fail to cover the conception of art, and which suppose beauty to consist either in utility, or in adjustment to a purpose, or in symmetry, or in order, or in propor-

¹ Knight, pp. 258, 259.

² Knight, p. 243.

tion, or in smoothness, or in harmony of the parts, or in unity amid variety, or in various combinations of these — not reckoning these unsatisfactory attempts at objective definition, all the æsthetic definitions of beauty lead to two fundamental conceptions. The first is that beauty is something having an independent existence (existing in itself), that it is one of the manifestations of the absolutely Perfect, of the Idea, of the Spirit, of Will, or of God; the other is that beauty is a kind of pleasure received by us, not having personal advantage for its object.

The first of these definitions was accepted by Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and the philosophizing Frenchmen, Cousin, Jouffroy, Ravaisson, and others, not to enumerate the second-rate æsthetic philosophers. And this same objective-mystical definition of beauty is held by a majority of the educated people of our day. It is a conception very widely spread, especially among the elder generation.

The second view, that beauty is a certain kind of pleasure received by us, not having personal advantage for its aim, finds favor chiefly among the English æsthetic writers, and is shared by the other part of our society, principally by the younger generation.

So there are (and it could not be otherwise) only two definitions of beauty: the one objective, mystical, merging this conception into that of the highest perfection, God — a fantastic definition, founded on nothing; the other, on the contrary, a very simple and intelligible subjective one, which considers beauty to be that which pleases (I do not add to the word "pleases" the words "without the aim of advantage," because "pleases" naturally presupposes the absence of the idea of profit).

On the one hand, beauty is viewed as something mystical and very elevated, but unfortunately at the same time very indefinite, and consequently embracing philosophy, religion, and life itself (as in the theories of Schelling and Hegel, and their German and French followers); or, on the other hand (as necessarily follows from the definition of Kant and his adherents),

beauty is simply a certain kind of disinterested pleasure received by us. And this conception of beauty, although it seems very clear is, unfortunately, again inexact; for it widens out on the other side, *i.e.* it includes the pleasure derived from drink, from food, from touching a delicate skin, etc., as is acknowledged by Guyau, Kralik, and others.

It is true that, following the development of the æsthetic doctrines on beauty, we may notice that, though at first (in the times when the foundations of the science of æsthetics were being laid) the metaphysical definition of beauty prevailed, yet the nearer we get to our own times the more does an experimental definition (recently assuming a physiological form) come to the front, so that at last we even meet with such æstheticians as Véron and Sully, who try to escape entirely from the conception of beauty. But such æstheticians have very little success, and with the majority of the public, as well as of artists and the learned, a conception of beauty is firmly held which agrees with the definitions contained in most of the æsthetic treatises, *i.e.* which regards beauty either as something mystical or metaphysical, or as a special kind of enjoyment.

What, then, is this conception of beauty, so stubbornly held to by people of our circle and day as furnishing a definition of art?

In the subjective aspect, we call beauty that which supplies us with a particular kind of pleasure.

In the objective aspect, we call beauty something absolutely perfect, and we acknowledge it to be so only because we receive, from the manifestation of this absolute perfection, a certain kind of pleasure; so that this objective definition is nothing but the subjective conception differently expressed. In reality both conceptions of beauty amount to one and the same thing; namely, the reception by us of a certain kind of pleasure; *i.e.* we call "beauty" that which pleases us without evoking in us desire.

Such being the position of affairs, it would seem only natural that the science of art should decline to content

itself with a definition of art based on beauty (*i.e.* on that which pleases), and seek a general definition, which should apply to all artistic productions, and by reference to which we might decide whether a certain article belonged to the realm of art or not. But no such definition is supplied, as the reader may see from those summaries of the æsthetic theories which I have given, and as he may discover even more clearly from the original æsthetic works, if he will be at the pains to read them. All attempts to define absolute beauty in itself — whether as an imitation of nature, or as suitability to its object, or as a correspondence of parts, or as symmetry, or as harmony, or as unity in variety, etc. — either define nothing at all, or define only some traits of some artistic productions, and are far from including all that everybody has always held, and still holds, to be art.

There is no objective definition of beauty. The existing definitions (both the metaphysical and the experimental) amount only to one and the same subjective definition, which (strange as it seems to say so) is, that art is that which makes beauty manifest, and beauty is that which pleases (without exciting desire). Many æstheticians have felt the insufficiency and instability of such a definition, and, in order to give it a firm basis, have asked themselves why a thing pleases. And they have converted the discussion on beauty into a question concerning taste, as did Hutcheson, Voltaire, Diderot, and others. But all attempts to define what taste is must lead to nothing, as the reader may see both from the history of æsthetics and experimentally. There is and can be no explanation of why one thing pleases one man and displeases another, or *vice versa*. So that the whole existing science of æsthetics fails to do what we might expect from it, being a mental activity calling itself a science; namely, it does not define the qualities and laws of art, or of the beautiful (if that be the content of art), or the nature of taste (if taste decides the question of art and its merit), and then, on the basis of such definitions, acknowledge as art those productions

which correspond to these laws, and reject those which do not come under them. But this science of æsthetics consists in first acknowledging a certain set of productions to be art (because they please us), and then framing such a theory of art that all those productions which please a certain circle of people should fit into it. There exists an art canon, according to which certain productions favored by our circle are acknowledged as being art, — Phidias, Sophocles, Homer, Titian, Raphael, Bach, Beethoven, Dante, Shakespear, Goethe, and others, — and the æsthetic laws must be such as to embrace all these productions. In æsthetic literature you will incessantly meet with opinions on the merit and importance of art, founded not on any certain laws by which this or that is held to be good or bad, but merely on the consideration whether this art tallies with the art canon we have drawn up.

The other day I was reading a far from ill-written book by Folgeldt. Discussing the demand for morality in works of art, the author plainly says that we must not demand morality in art. And in proof of this he advances the fact that if we admit such a demand, Shakespear's "Romeo and Juliet," and Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," would not fit into the definition of good art; but since both these books are included in our canon of art, he concludes that the demand is unjust. And therefore it is necessary to find a definition of art which shall fit the works; and instead of a demand for morality, Folgeldt postulates as the basis of art a demand for the important (*Bedeutungsvolles*).

All the existing æsthetic standards are built on this plan. Instead of giving a definition of true art, and then deciding what is and what is not good art by judging whether a work conforms or does not conform to the definition, a certain class of works, which for some reason please a certain circle of people, is accepted as being art, and a definition of art is then devised to cover all these productions. I recently came upon a remarkable instance of this method in a very good German work, "The History of Art in the Nineteenth Cen-

ture," by Muther. Describing the pre-Raphaelites, the Decadents and the Symbolists (who are already included in the canon of art), he not only does not venture to blame their tendency, but earnestly endeavors to widen his standard so that it may include them all, they appearing to him to represent a legitimate reaction from the excesses of realism. No matter what insanities appear in art, when once they find acceptance among the upper classes of our society, a theory is quickly invented to explain and sanction them; just as if there had never been periods in history when certain special circles of people recognized and approved false, deformed, and insensate art which subsequently left no trace and has been utterly forgotten. And to what lengths the insanity and deformity of art may go, especially when, as in our days, it knows that it is considered infallible, may be seen by what is being done in the art of our circle to-day.

So that the theory of art, founded on beauty, expounded by æsthetics, and, in dim outline, professed by the public, is nothing but the setting up as good of that which has pleased and pleases us, *i.e.* pleases a certain class of people.

In order to define any human activity, it is necessary to understand its sense and importance. And, in order to do that, it is primarily necessary to examine that activity in itself, in its dependence on its causes, and in connection with its effects, and not merely in relation to the pleasure we can get from it.

If we say that the aim of any activity is merely our pleasure, and define it solely by that pleasure, our definition will evidently be a false one. But this is precisely what has occurred in the efforts to define art. Now, if we consider the food question, it will not occur to anyone to affirm that the importance of food consists in the pleasure we receive when eating it. Every one understands that the satisfaction of our taste cannot serve as a basis for our definition of the merits of food, and that we have therefore no right to presuppose that the dinners with cayenne pepper, Limburg cheese,

alcohol, etc., to which we are accustomed and which please us, form the very best human food.

And in the same way, beauty, or that which pleases us, can in no sense serve as the basis for the definition of art; nor can a series of objects which afford us pleasure serve as the model of what art should be.

To see the aim and purpose of art in the pleasure we get from it, is like assuming (as is done by people of the lowest moral development, *e.g.* by savages) that the purpose and aim of food is the pleasure derived when consuming it.

Just as people who conceive the aim and purpose of food to be pleasure cannot recognize the real meaning of eating, so people who consider the aim of art to be pleasure cannot realize its true meaning and purpose, because they attribute to an activity, the meaning of which lies in its connection with other phenomena of life, the false and exceptional aim of pleasure. People come to understand that the meaning of eating lies in the nourishment of the body only when they cease to consider that the object of that activity is pleasure. And it is the same with regard to art. People will come to understand the meaning of art only when they cease to consider that the aim of that activity is beauty, *i.e.* pleasure. The acknowledgment of beauty (*i.e.* of a certain kind of pleasure received from art) as being the aim of art, not only fails to assist us in finding a definition of what art is, but, on the contrary, by transferring the question into a region quite foreign to art (into metaphysical, psychological, physiological, and even historical discussions as to why such a production pleases one person, and such another displeases or pleases some one else), it renders such definition impossible. And since discussions as to why one man likes pears and another prefers meat do not help toward finding a definition of what is essential in nourishment, so the solution of questions of taste in art (to which the discussions on art involuntarily come), not only does not help to make clear what this particular human activity which we call art really consists in, but renders such

elucidation quite impossible, until we rid ourselves of a conception which justifies every kind of art, at the cost of confusing the whole matter.

To the question, What is this art, to which is offered up the labor of millions, the very lives of men, and even morality itself? we have extracted replies from the existing æsthetics, which all amount to this: that the aim of art is beauty, that beauty is recognized by the enjoyment it gives, and that artistic enjoyment is a good and important thing, because it *is* enjoyment. In a word, that enjoyment is good because it is enjoyment. Thus, what is considered the definition of art is no definition at all, but only a shuffle to justify existing art. Therefore, however strange it may seem to say so, in spite of the mountains of books written about art, no exact definition of art has been constructed. And the reason of this is that the conception of art has been based on the conception of beauty.

CHAPTER V

WHAT is art, if we put aside the conception of beauty, which confuses the whole matter? The latest and most comprehensible definitions of art, apart from the conception of beauty, are the following: (1 *a*) Art is an activity arising even in the animal kingdom, and springing from sexual desire and the propensity to play (Schiller, Darwin, Spencer), and (1 *b*) accompanied by a pleasurable excitement of the nervous system (Grant Allen). This is the physiological-evolutionary definition. (2) Art is the external manifestation, by means of lines, colors, movements, sounds, or words, of emotions felt by man (Véron). This is the experimental definition. According to the very latest definition (Sully), (3) Art is "the production of some permanent object or passing action, which is fitted, not only to supply an active enjoyment to the producer, but to convey a pleasurable impression to a number of spectators or listeners, quite apart from any personal advantage to be derived from it."

Notwithstanding the superiority of these definitions to the metaphysical definitions which depended on the conception of beauty, they are yet far from exact. (1 *a*) The first, the physiological-evolutionary definition, is inexact, because, instead of speaking about the artistic activity itself, which is the real matter in hand, it treats of the derivation of art. The modification of it (1 *b*), based on the physiological effects on the human organism, is inexact, because within the limits of such definition many other human activities can be included, as has occurred in the neo-æsthetic theories, which reckon as art the preparation of handsome clothes, pleasant scents, and even of victuals.

The experimental definition (2), which makes art consist in the expression of emotions, is inexact, because a man may express his emotions by means of lines, colors, sounds, or words, and yet may not act on others by such expression; and then the manifestation of his emotions is not art.

The third definition (that of Sully) is inexact, because in the production of objects or actions affording pleasure to the producer and a pleasant emotion to the spectators or hearers apart from personal advantage may be included the showing of conjuring tricks or gymnastic exercises, and other activities which are not art. And, further, many things, the production of which does not afford pleasure to the producer, and the sensation received from which is unpleasant, such as gloomy, heart-rending scenes in a poetic description or a play, may nevertheless be undoubted works of art.

The inaccuracy of all these definitions arises from the fact that in them all (as also in the metaphysical definitions) the object considered is the pleasure art may give, and not the purpose it may serve in the life of man and of humanity.

In order correctly to define art, it is necessary, first of all, to cease to consider it as a means to pleasure, and to consider it as one of the conditions of human life. Viewing it in this way, we cannot fail to observe that art is one of the means of intercourse between man and man.

Every work of art causes the receiver to enter into a certain kind of relationship both with him who produced, or is producing, the art, and with all those who, simultaneously, previously, or subsequently, receive the same artistic impression.

Speech, transmitting the thoughts and experiences of men, serves as a means of union among them, and art acts in a similar manner. The peculiarity of this latter means of intercourse, distinguishing it from intercourse by means of words, consists in this, that whereas by words a man transmits his thoughts to another, by means of art he transmits his feelings.

The activity of art is based on the fact that a man, receiving through his sense of hearing or sight another man's expression of feeling, is capable of experiencing the emotion which moved the man who expressed it. To take the simplest example: one man laughs, and another, who hears, becomes merry; or a man weeps, and another, who hears, feels sorrow. A man is excited or irritated, and another man, seeing him, comes to a similar state of mind. By his movements, or by the sounds of his voice, a man expresses courage and determination, or sadness and calmness, and this state of mind passes on to others. A man suffers, expressing his sufferings by groans and spasms, and this suffering transmits itself to other people; a man expresses his feeling of admiration, devotion, fear, respect, or love to certain objects, persons, or phenomena, and others are infected by the same feelings of admiration, devotion, fear, respect, or love to the same objects, persons, and phenomena.

And it is on this capacity of man to receive another man's expression of feeling, and experience those feelings himself, that the activity of art is based.

If a man infects another or others, directly, immediately, by his appearance, or by the sounds he gives vent to at the very time he experiences the feeling; if he causes another man to yawn when he himself cannot help yawning, or to laugh or cry when he himself is obliged to laugh or cry, or to suffer when he himself is suffering — that does not amount to art.

Art begins when one person, with the object of joining another or others to himself in one and the same feeling, expresses that feeling by certain external indications. To take the simplest example: a boy, having experienced, let us say, fear on encountering a wolf, relates that encounter; and, in order to evoke in others the feeling he has experienced, describes himself, his condition before the encounter, the surroundings, the wood, his own light-heartedness, and then the wolf's appearance, its movements, the distance between himself and the wolf, etc. All this, if only the boy, when telling the story, again experiences the feelings he had lived through and infects the hearers and compels them to feel what the narrator had experienced, is art. If even the boy had not seen a wolf but had frequently been afraid of one, and if, wishing to evoke in others the fear he had felt, he invented an encounter with a wolf, and recounted it so as to make his hearers share the feelings he experienced when he feared the wolf, that also would be art. And just in the same way it is art if a man, having experienced either the fear of suffering or the attraction of enjoyment (whether in reality or in imagination), expresses these feelings on canvas or in marble so that others are infected by them. And it is also art if a man feels or imagines to himself feelings of delight, gladness, sorrow, despair, courage, or despondency, and the transition from one to another of these feelings, and expresses these feelings by sounds, so that the hearers are infected by them, and experience them as they were experienced by the composer.

The feelings with which the artist infects others may be most various,—very strong or very weak, very important or very insignificant, very bad or very good: feelings of love for native land, self-devotion and submission to fate or to God expressed in a drama, raptures of lovers described in a novel, feelings of voluptuousness expressed in a picture, courage expressed in a triumphal march, merriment evoked by a dance, humor evoked by a funny story, the feeling of quietness transmitted by an evening landscape or by a lullaby, or the

feeling of admiration evoked by a beautiful arabesque — it is all art.

If only the spectators or auditors are infected by the feelings which the author has felt, it is art.

To evoke in oneself a feeling one has once experienced, and having evoked it in oneself, then, by means of movements, lines, colors, sounds, or forms expressed in words, so to transmit that feeling that others may experience the same feeling — this is the activity of art.

Art is a human activity, consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings, and also experience them.

Art is not, as the metaphysicians say, the manifestation of some mysterious Idea of beauty, or God; it is not, as the æsthetical physiologists say, a game in which man lets off his excess of stored-up energy; it is not the expression of man's emotions by external signs; it is not the production of pleasing objects; and, above all, it is not pleasure; but it is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress toward well-being of individuals and of humanity.

As, thanks to man's capacity to express thoughts by words, every man may know all that has been done for him in the realms of thought by all humanity before his day, and can, in the present, thanks to this capacity to understand the thoughts of others, become a sharer in their activity, and can himself hand on to his contemporaries and descendants the thoughts he has assimilated from others, as well as those which have arisen within himself; so, thanks to man's capacity to be infected with the feelings of others by means of art, all that is being lived through by his contemporaries is accessible to him, as well as the feelings experienced by men thousands of years ago, and he has also the possibility of transmitting his own feelings to others.

If people lacked this capacity to receive the thoughts conceived by the men who preceded them, and to pass

on to others their own thoughts, men would be like wild beasts, or like Kaspar Hauser.¹

And if men lacked this other capacity of being infected by art, people might be almost more savage still, and, above all, more separated from, and more hostile to, one another.

And therefore the activity of art is a most important one, as important as the activity of speech itself, and as generally diffused.

We are accustomed to understand art to be only what we hear and see in theaters, concerts, and exhibitions; together with buildings, statues, poems, novels. But all this is but the smallest part of the art by which we communicate with each other in life. All human life is filled with works of art of every kind, — from cradle-song, jest, mimicry, the ornamentation of houses, dress, and utensils, up to church services, buildings, monuments, and triumphal processions. It is all artistic activity. So that by art, in the limited sense of the word, we do not mean all human activity transmitting feelings, but only that part which we for some reason select from it and to which we attach special importance.

This special importance has always been given by all men to that part of this activity which transmits feelings flowing from their religious perception, and this small part of art they have specifically called art, attaching to it the full meaning of the word.

That was how men of old — Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle — looked on art. Thus did the Hebrew prophets and the ancient Christians regard art; thus it was, and still is, understood by the Mahomedans, and thus is it still understood by religious folk among our own peasantry.

Some teachers of mankind — as Plato in his "Republic," and people such as the primitive Christians, the strict

¹"The foundling of Nuremberg," found in the market-place of that town on 26th May, 1828, apparently some sixteen years old. He spoke little, and was almost totally ignorant even of common objects. He subsequently explained that he had been brought up in confinement underground, and visited by only one man, whom he saw but seldom. — Tr.

Mahommedans, and the Buddhists — have gone so far as to repudiate all art.

People viewing art in this way (in contradiction to the prevalent view of to-day, which regards any art as good if only it affords pleasure) considered, and consider, that art (as contrasted with speech, which need not be listened to) is so highly dangerous in its power to infect people against their wills, that mankind will lose far less by banishing all art than by tolerating each and every art.

Evidently such people were wrong in repudiating all art, for they denied that which cannot be denied, — one of the indispensable means of communication, without which mankind could not exist. But not less wrong are the people of civilized European society of our class and day, in favoring any art if it but serves beauty, *i.e.* gives people pleasure.

Formerly, people feared lest among the works of art there might chance to be some causing corruption, and they prohibited art altogether. Now, they only fear lest they should be deprived of any enjoyment art can afford, and patronize any art. And I think the last error is much grosser than the first, and that its consequences are far more harmful.

CHAPTER VI

BUT how could it happen that that very art, which in ancient times was merely tolerated (if tolerated at all), should have come, in our times, to be invariably considered a good thing if only it affords pleasure?

It has resulted from the following causes. The estimation of the value of art (*i.e.* of the feelings it transmits) depends on men's perception of the meaning of life; depends on what they consider to be the good and the evil of life. And what is good and what is evil is defined by what are termed religions.

Humanity unceasingly moves forward from a lower, more partial, and obscure understanding of life, to one

more general and more lucid. And in this, as in every movement, there are leaders, — those who have understood the meaning of life more clearly than others, — and of these advanced men there is always one who has, in his words and by his life, expressed this meaning more clearly, accessibly, and strongly than others. This man's expression of the meaning of life, together with those superstitions, traditions, and ceremonies which usually form themselves round the memory of such a man, is what is called a religion. Religions are the exponents of the highest comprehension of life accessible to the best and foremost men at a given time in a given society; a comprehension toward which, inevitably and irresistibly, all the rest of that society must advance. And therefore only religions have always served, and still serve, as bases for the valuation of human sentiments. If feelings bring men nearer the ideal their religion indicates, if they are in harmony with it and do not contradict it, they are good; if they estrange men from it and oppose it, they are bad.

If the religion places the meaning of life in worshipping one God and fulfilling what is regarded as His will, as was the case among the Jews, then the feelings flowing from love to that God, and to His law, successfully transmitted through the art of poetry by the prophets, by the psalms, or by the epic of the book of Genesis, is good, high art. All opposing that, as, for instance, the transmission of feelings of devotion to strange gods, or of feelings incompatible with the law of God, would be considered bad art. Or if, as was the case among the Greeks, the religion places the meaning of life in earthly happiness, in beauty and in strength, then art successfully transmitting the joy and energy of life would be considered good art, but art which transmitted feelings of effeminacy or despondency would be bad art. If the meaning of life is seen in the well-being of one's nation, or in honoring one's ancestors and continuing the mode of life led by them, as was the case among the Romans

and the Chinese respectively, then art transmitting feelings of joy at sacrificing one's personal well-being for the common weal, or at exalting one's ancestors and maintaining their traditions, would be considered good art, but art expressing feelings contrary to this would be regarded as bad. If the meaning of life is seen in freeing oneself from the yoke of animalism, as is the case among the Buddhists, then art successfully transmitting feelings that elevate the soul and humble the flesh will be good art, and all that transmits feelings strengthening the bodily passions will be bad art.

In every age, and in every human society, there exists a religious sense, common to that whole society, of what is good and what is bad, and it is this religious conception that decides the value of the feelings transmitted by art. And therefore, among all nations, art which transmitted feelings considered to be good by this general religious sense was recognized as being good and was encouraged; but art which transmitted feelings considered to be bad by this general religious conception, was recognized as being bad, and was rejected. All the rest of the immense field of art by means of which people communicate one with another, was not esteemed at all, and was only noticed when it ran counter to the religious conception of its age, and then merely to be repudiated. Thus it was among all nations, — Greeks, Jews, Indians, Egyptians, and Chinese, — and so it was when Christianity appeared.

The Christianity of the first centuries recognized as productions of good art only legends, lives of saints, sermons, prayers, and hymn-singing, evoking love of Christ, emotion at His life, desire to follow His example, renunciation of worldly life, humility, and the love of others; all productions transmitting feelings of personal enjoyment they considered to be bad, and therefore rejected: for instance, tolerating plastic representations only when they were symbolical, they rejected all the pagan sculptures.

This was so among the Christians of the first cen-

turies, who accepted Christ's teaching, if not quite in its true form, at least not in the perverted, paganized form in which it was accepted subsequently.

But besides this Christianity, from the time of the wholesale conversion of nations by order of the authorities, as in the days of Constantine, Charlemagne, and Vladimir, there appeared another, a Church Christianity, which was nearer to paganism than to Christ's teaching. And this Church Christianity, in accordance with its own teaching, estimated quite otherwise the feelings of people and the productions of art which transmitted those feelings.

This Church Christianity not only did not acknowledge the fundamental and essential positions of true Christianity, — the immediate relationship of each man to the Father, the consequent brotherhood and equality of all men, and the substitution of humility and love in place of every kind of violence, — but, on the contrary, having set up a heavenly hierarchy similar to the pagan mythology, and having introduced the worship of Christ, of the Virgin, of angels, of apostles, of saints, and of martyrs, and not only of these divinities themselves, but also of their images, it made blind faith in the Church and its ordinances the essential point of its teaching.

However foreign this teaching may have been to true Christianity; however degraded, not only in comparison with true Christianity, but even with the life-conception of Romans such as Julian and others, — it was, for all that, to the barbarians who accepted it, a higher doctrine than their former adoration of gods, heroes, and good and bad spirits. And therefore this teaching was a religion to them, and on the basis of that religion the art of the time was assessed. And art transmitting pious adoration of the Virgin, Jesus, the saints and the angels, a blind faith in and submission to the Church, fear of torments and hope of blessedness in a life beyond the grave, was considered good; all art opposed to this was considered bad.

The teaching on the basis of which this art arose

was a perversion of Christ's teaching, but the art which sprang up on this perverted teaching was nevertheless a true art, because it corresponded to the religious view of life held by the people among whom it arose.

The artists of the Middle Ages, vitalized by the same source of feeling — religion — as the mass of the people, and transmitting, in architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry or drama, the feelings and states of mind they experienced, were true artists; and their activity, founded on the highest conceptions accessible to their age and common to the entire people, though, for our times a mean art, was, nevertheless a true one, shared by the whole community.

And this was the state of things until, in the upper, rich, more educated classes of European society, doubt arose as to the truth of that understanding of life which was expressed by Church Christianity. When, after the Crusades and the maximum development of papal power and its abuses, people of the rich classes became acquainted with the wisdom of the classics, and saw, on the one hand, the reasonable lucidity of the teaching of the ancient sages, and, on the other hand, the incompatibility of the Church doctrine with the teaching of Christ, they lost all possibility of continuing to believe the Church teaching.

If, in externals, they still kept to the forms of Church teaching, they could no longer believe in it, and held to it only by inertia and for the sake of influencing the masses, who continued to believe blindly in Church doctrine, and whom the upper classes, for their own advantage, considered it necessary to support in those beliefs.

So that a time came when Church Christianity ceased to be the general religious doctrine of all Christian people; some — the masses — continued blindly to believe in it, but the upper classes — those in whose hands lay the power and wealth, and therefore the leisure to produce art and the means to stimulate it — ceased to believe in that teaching.

In respect to religion, the upper circles of the Middle Ages found themselves in the same position in which the educated Romans were before Christianity arose, *i.e.* they no longer believed in the religion of the masses, but had no beliefs to put in place of the worn-out Church doctrine which for them had lost its meaning.

There was only this difference: that whereas for the Romans, who lost faith in their emperor-gods and household-gods, it was impossible to extract anything further from all the complex mythology they had borrowed from all the conquered nations, and it was consequently necessary to find a completely new conception of life, the people of the Middle Ages, when they doubted the truth of the Church teaching, had no need to seek a fresh one. That Christian teaching which they professed in a perverted form as Church doctrine had mapped out the path of human progress so far ahead that they had but to rid themselves of those perversions which hid the teaching announced by Christ, and to adopt its real meaning — if not completely, then at least in some greater degree than that in which the Church had held it. And this was partially done, not only in the reformations of Wyclif, Huss, Luther, and Calvin, but by all that current of non-Church Christianity represented in earlier times by the Paulicians, the Bogomili,¹ and, afterward, by the Waldenses and the other non-Church Christians who were called heretics. But this could be, and was, done chiefly by poor people — who did not rule. A few of the rich and strong, like Francis of Assisi and others, accepted the Christian teaching in its full significance, even though it undermined their privileged positions. But most people of the upper classes (though in the depth of their souls they had lost faith in the Church teaching) could not or would not act thus, because the essence of that Christian view of life, which stood ready to be adopted when once they rejected the Church faith,

¹ Eastern sects well known in early Church history, who rejected the Church's rendering of Christ's teaching, and were cruelly persecuted.
— TR.

was a teaching of the brotherhood (and therefore the equality) of man, and this negated those privileges on which they lived, in which they had grown up and been educated, and to which they were accustomed. Not, in the depth of their hearts, believing in the Church teaching,—which had outlived its age and had no longer any true meaning for them,—and not being strong enough to accept true Christianity, men of these rich, governing classes—popes, kings, dukes, and all the great ones of the earth—were left without any religion, with but the external forms of one, which they supported as being profitable and even necessary for themselves, since these forms screened a teaching which justified those privileges which they made use of. In reality, these people believed in nothing, just as the Romans of the first centuries of our era believed in nothing. But at the same time these were the people who had the power and the wealth, and these were the people who rewarded art and directed it.

And, let it be noticed, it was just among these people that there grew up an art esteemed, not according to its success in expressing men's religious feelings, but in proportion to its beauty,—in other words, according to the enjoyment it gave.

No longer able to believe in the Church religion, whose falsehood they had detected, and incapable of accepting true Christian teaching, which denounced their whole manner of life, these rich and powerful people, stranded without any religious conception of life, involuntarily returned to that pagan view of things which places life's meaning in personal enjoyment. And then took place among the upper classes what is called the "Renaissance of science and art," and which was really not only a denial of every religion, but also an assertion that religion is unnecessary.

The Church doctrine is so coherent a system that it cannot be altered or corrected without destroying it altogether. As soon as doubt arose with regard to the infallibility of the Pope (and this doubt was then in the minds of all educated people), doubt inevitably followed

as to the truth of tradition. But doubt as to the truth of tradition is fatal not only to popery and Catholicism, but also to the whole Church creed, with all its dogmas: the divinity of Christ, the resurrection, and the Trinity; and it destroys the authority of the Scriptures, since they were considered to be inspired only because the tradition of the Church decided it so.

So that the majority of the highest classes of that age, even the popes and the ecclesiastics, really believed in nothing at all. In the Church doctrine these people did not believe, for they saw its insolvency; but neither could they follow Francis of Assisi, Keltchitsky,¹ and most of the heretics, in acknowledging the moral, social teaching of Christ, for that teaching undermined their social position. And so these people remained without any religious view of life. And, having none, they could have no standard wherewith to estimate what was good and what was bad art but that of personal enjoyment. And, having acknowledged their criterion of what was good to be pleasure, *i.e.* beauty, these people of the upper classes of European society went back in their comprehension of art to the gross conception of the primitive Greeks which Plato had already condemned. And conformably to this understanding of life, a theory of art was formulated.

CHAPTER VII

FROM the time that people of the upper classes lost faith in Church Christianity, beauty (*i.e.* the pleasure received from art) became their standard of good and bad art. And, in accordance with that view, an æsthetic theory naturally sprang up among those upper classes justifying such a conception, — a theory according to which the aim of art is to exhibit beauty. The partizans of this æsthetic theory, in confirmation of its truth, af-

¹ Keltchitsky, a Bohemian of the fifteenth century, was the author of a remarkable book, "The Net of Faith," directed against Church and State. It is mentioned in Tolstol's "The Kingdom of God is Within You." — TR.

firmed that it was no invention of their own, but that it existed in the nature of things, and was recognized even by the ancient Greeks. But this assertion was quite arbitrary, and has no foundation other than the fact that among the ancient Greeks, in consequence of the low grade of their moral ideal (as compared with the Christian), their conception of the good, τὸ ἀγαθόν, was not yet sharply divided from their conception of the beautiful, τὸ καλόν.

That highest perfection of goodness (not only not identical with beauty, but, for the most part, contrasting with it) which was discerned by the Jews even in the times of Isaiah, and fully expressed by Christianity, was quite unknown to the Greeks. They supposed that the beautiful must necessarily also be the good. It is true that their foremost thinkers—Socrates, Plato, Aristotle—felt that goodness may happen not to coincide with beauty. Socrates expressly subordinated beauty to goodness; Plato, to unite the two conceptions, spoke of spiritual beauty; while Aristotle demanded from art that it should have a moral influence on people (κάθαρσις). But, notwithstanding all this, they could not quite dismiss the notion that beauty and goodness coincide.

And consequently, in the language of that period, a compound word (καλο-κἀγαθία, beauty-goodness) came into use to express that notion.

Evidently the Greek sages began to draw near to that perception of goodness which is expressed in Buddhism and in Christianity, and they got entangled in defining the relation between goodness and beauty. Plato's reasonings about beauty and goodness are full of contradictions. And it was just this confusion of ideas that those Europeans of a later age, who had lost all faith, tried to elevate into a law. They tried to prove that this union of beauty and goodness is inherent in the very essence of things; that beauty and goodness must coincide; and that the word and conception καλο-κἀγαθία (which had a meaning for Greeks, but has none at all for Christians) represents the highest ideal of humanity. On this misunderstanding the new science of æsthetics was

built up. And, to justify its existence, the teachings of the ancients on art were so twisted as to make it appear that this invented science of æsthetics had existed among the Greeks.

In reality, the reasoning of the ancients on art was quite unlike ours. As Benard, in his book on the æsthetics of Aristotle, quite justly remarks, "*Pour qui veut y regarder de près, la théorie du beau et celle de l'art sont tout à fait séparées dans Aristote, comme elles le sont dans Platon et chez tous leurs successeurs*" ("L'Esthétique d'Aristote et de ses Successeurs," Paris, 1889, p. 28).¹ And indeed the reasoning of the ancients on art not only does not confirm our science of æsthetics, but rather contradicts its doctrine of beauty. But nevertheless all the æsthetic guides, from Schasler to Knight, declare that the science of the beautiful — æsthetic science — was commenced by the ancients, by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle; and was continued, they say, partially by the Epicureans and Stoics: by Seneca and Plutarch, down to Plotinus. But it is supposed that this science, by some unfortunate accident, suddenly vanished in the fourth century, and stayed away for about 1500 years, and only after these 1500 years had passed did it revive in Germany, 1750 A.D., in Baumgarten's doctrine.

After Plotinus, says Schasler, fifteen centuries passed away during which there was not the slightest scientific interest felt for the world of beauty and art. These one and a half thousand years, says he, have been lost to æsthetics, and have contributed nothing toward the erection of the learned edifice of this science.²

¹ Any one examining closely may see that the theory of beauty and that of art are quite separated in Aristotle as they are in Plato and in all their successors.

² Die Lücke von fünf Jahrhunderten, welche zwischen den Kunst-philosophischen Betrachtungen des Plato und Aristoteles und die des Plotins fällt, kann zwar auffällig erscheinen; dennoch kann man eigentlich nicht sagen, dass in dieser Zwischenzeit überhaupt von ästhetischen Dingen nicht die Rede gewesen; oder dass gar ein völliger Mangel an Zusammenhang zwischen den Kunst-anschauungen des letztgenannten Philosophen und denen der ersteren existire. Freilich wurde die von Aristoteles begründete Wissenschaft in Nichts dadurch gefördert; immerhin aber zeigt sich in jener Zwischenzeit noch ein gewisses Interesse für ästhetische

In reality nothing of the kind happened. The science of æsthetics, the science of the beautiful, neither did nor could vanish, because it never existed. Simply, the Greeks (just like everybody else, always and everywhere) considered art (like everything else) good only when it served goodness (as they understood goodness), and bad when it was in opposition to that goodness. And the Greeks themselves were so little developed morally, that goodness and beauty seemed to them to coincide. On that obsolete Greek view of life was erected the science of æsthetics, invented by men of the eighteenth century, and especially shaped and mounted in Baumgarten's theory. The Greeks (as any one may see who will read Benard's admirable book on Aristotle and his successors and Walter's work on Plato) never had a science of æsthetics.

Æsthetic theories arose about one hundred and fifty years ago among the wealthy classes of the Christian European world, and arose simultaneously among different nations, — German, Italian, Dutch, French, and English. The founder and organizer of it, who gave it a scientific, theoretic form, was Baumgarten.

With a characteristically German, external exactitude, pedantry, and symmetry, he devised and expounded this extraordinary theory. And, notwithstanding its obvious insolidity, nobody else's theory so pleased the cultured crowd, or was accepted so readily and with such an absence of criticism. It so suited the people of the upper classes, that to this day, notwithstanding its entirely fantastic character and the arbitrary nature of its assertions, it is repeated by learned and unlearned as though it were something indubitable and self-evident.

Fragen. Nach Plotin aber, die wenigen, ihm in der Zeit nahestehenden Philosophen, wie Longin, Augustin, u. s. f. kommen, wie wir gesehen, kaum in Betracht und schliessen sich übrigens in ihrer Anschauungsweise an ihn an, — vergehen nicht fünf, sondern *fünfzehn Jahrhunderte*, in denen von irgend einer wissenschaftlichen Interesse für die Welt des Schönen und der Kunst nichts zu spüren ist.

Diese anderthalbtausend Jahre, innerhalb deren der Weltgeist durch die mannigfachsten Kämpfe hindurch zu einer völlig neuen Gestaltung des Lebens sich durcharbeitete, sind für die Aesthetik, hinsichtlich des weiteren Ausbaus dieser Wissenschaft verloren. — MAX SCHASLER.

Habent sua fata libelli pro capite lectoris, and so, or even more so, theories *habent sua fata* according to the condition of error in which that society is living, among whom and for whom the theories are invented. If a theory justifies the false position in which a certain part of a society is living, then, however unfounded or even obviously false the theory may be, it is accepted, and becomes an article of faith to that section of society. Such, for instance, was the celebrated and unfounded theory, expounded by Malthus, of the tendency of that population of the world to increase in geometrical progression, but of the means of sustenance to increase only in arithmetical progression, and of the consequent over-population of the world; such, also, was the theory (an outgrowth of the Malthusian) of selection and struggle for existence as the basis of human progress. Such, again, is Marx's theory, which regards the gradual destruction of small private production by large capitalistic production, now going on around us, as an inevitable decree of fate. However unfounded such theories are, however contrary to all that is known and confessed by humanity, and however obviously immoral they may be, they are accepted with credulity, pass uncriticized, and are preached, perchance for centuries, until the conditions are destroyed which they served to justify, or until their absurdity has become too evident. To this class belongs this astonishing theory of the Baumgartenian Trinity, — Goodness, Beauty, and Truth, — according to which it appears that the very best that can be done by the art of nations after 1900 years of Christian teaching, is to choose as the ideal of their life the ideal that was held by a small, semi-savage, slave-holding people who lived 2000 years ago, who imitated the nude human body extremely well, and erected buildings pleasant to look at. All these incompatibilities pass completely unnoticed. Learned people write long, cloudy treatises on beauty as a member of the æsthetic trinity of Beauty, Truth, and Goodness: *das Schöne, das Wahre, das Gute; le Beau, le Vrai, le Bon*, are repeated, with capital letters, by philosophers, æstheticians, and artists, by private in-

dividuals, by novelists, and by *feuilletonistes*, and they all think, when pronouncing these sacrosanct words, that they speak of something quite definite and solid — something on which they can base their opinions. In reality, these words not only have no definite meaning, but they hinder us in attaching any definite meaning to existing art; they are wanted only for the purpose of justifying the false importance we attribute to an art that transmits every kind of feeling, if only those feelings afford us pleasure.

CHAPTER VIII

BUT if art is a human activity having for its purpose the transmission to others of the highest and best feelings to which men have risen, how could it be that humanity for a certain rather considerable period of its existence (from the time people ceased to believe in Church doctrine down to the present day) should exist without this important activity, and, instead of it, should put up with an insignificant artistic activity only affording pleasure?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary, first of all, to correct the current error people make in attributing to our art the significance of true, universal art. We are so accustomed, not only naïvely to consider the Circassian family the best stock of people, but also the Anglo-Saxon race the best race if we are Englishmen or Americans, or the Teutonic if we are Germans, or the Gallo-Latin if we are French, or the Slavonic if we are Russians, that, when speaking of our own art, we feel fully convinced, not only that our art is true art, but even that it is the best and only true art. But in reality our art is not only not the only art (as the Bible once was held to be the only book), but it is not even the art of the whole of Christendom — only of a small section of that part of humanity. It was correct to speak of a national Jewish, Grecian, or

Egyptian art, and one may speak of a now-existing Chinese, Japanese, or Indian art shared in by a whole people. Such art, common to a whole nation, existed in Russia till Peter the First's time, and existed in the rest of Europe until the thirteenth or fourteenth century ; but since the upper classes of European society, having lost faith in the Church teaching, did not accept real Christianity but remained without any faith, one can no longer speak of an art of the Christian nations in the sense of the whole of art. Since the upper classes of the Christian nations lost faith in Church Christianity, the art of those upper classes has separated itself from the art of the rest of the people, and there have been two arts, — the art of the people and genteel art. And therefore the answer to the question, How it could occur that humanity lived for a certain period without real art, replacing it by art which served enjoyment only ? is, that not all humanity, nor even any considerable portion of it, lived without real art, but only the highest classes of European Christian society, and even they only for a comparatively short time, — from the commencement of the Renaissance down to our own day.

And the consequence of this absence of true art showed itself, inevitably, in the corruption of that class which nourished itself on the false art. All the confused, unintelligible theories of art, all the false and contradictory judgments on art, and particularly the self-confident stagnation of our art in its false path, all arise from the assertion, which has come into common use and is accepted as an unquestioned truth, but is yet amazingly and palpably false, the assertion, namely, that the art of our upper classes¹ is the whole of art, the true, the only, the universal art. And although this assertion (which is precisely similar to the assertion made by religious people of the various Churches who consider that theirs is the only true religion) is quite arbitrary

¹ The contrast made is between the classes and the masses ; between those who do not and those who do earn their bread by productive manual labor ; the middle classes being taken as an offshoot of the upper classes. — TR.

and obviously unjust, yet it is calmly repeated by all the people of our circle with full faith in its infallibility.

The art we have is the whole of art, the real, the only art, and yet two-thirds of the human race (all the peoples of Asia and Africa) live and die knowing nothing of this sole and supreme art. And even in our Christian society hardly one per cent of the people make use of this art which we speak of as being the *whole* of art; the remaining ninety-nine per cent live and die, generation after generation, crushed by toil, and never tasting this art, which, moreover, is of such a nature that, if they could get it, they would not understand anything of it. We, according to the current æsthetic theory, acknowledge art as one of the highest manifestations of the Idea, God, Beauty, or as the highest spiritual enjoyment; furthermore, we hold that all people have equal rights, if not to material, at any rate to spiritual well-being; and yet ninety-nine per cent of our European population live and die, generation after generation, crushed by toil, much of which toil is necessary for the production of our art which they never use, and we, nevertheless, calmly assert that the art which we produce is the real, true, only art — all of art!

To the remark that if our art is the true art every one should have the benefit of it, the usual reply is that if not everybody at present makes use of existing art, the fault lies, not in the art, but in the false organization of society; that one can imagine to oneself, in the future, a state of things in which physical labor will be partly superseded by machinery, partly lightened by its just distribution, and that labor for the production of art will be taken in turns; that there is no need for some people always to sit below the stage moving the decorations, winding up the machinery, working at the piano or French horn, and setting type and printing books, but that the people who do all this work might be engaged only a few hours per day, and in their leisure time might enjoy all the blessings of art.

That is what the defenders of our exclusive art say. But I think they do not themselves believe it. They

cannot help knowing that fine art can arise only on the slavery of the masses of the people, and can continue only as long as that slavery lasts, and they cannot help knowing that only under conditions of intense labor for the workers, can specialists — writers, musicians, dancers, and actors — arrive at that fine degree of perfection to which they do attain, or produce their refined works of art; and only under the same conditions can there be a fine public to esteem such productions. Free the slaves of capital, and it will be impossible to produce such refined art.

But even were we to admit the inadmissible, and say that means may be found by which art (that art which among us is considered to be art) may be accessible to the whole people, another consideration presents itself showing that fashionable art cannot be the whole of art, viz., the fact that it is completely unintelligible to the people. Formerly men wrote poems in Latin, but now their artistic productions are as unintelligible to the common folk as if they were written in Sanscrit. The usual reply to this is, that if the people do not now understand this art of ours, it only proves that they are undeveloped, and that this has been so at each fresh step forward made by art. First it was not understood, but afterward people got accustomed to it.

"It will be the same with our present art; it will be understood when everybody is as well educated as we are — the people of the upper classes — who produce this art," say the defenders of our art. But this assertion is evidently even more unjust than the former; for we know that the majority of the productions of the art of the upper classes, such as various odes, poems, dramas, cantatas, pastorals, pictures, etc., which delighted the people of the upper classes when they were produced, never were afterward either understood or valued by the great masses of mankind, but have remained, what they were at first, a mere pastime for rich people of their time, for whom alone they ever were of any importance. It is also often urged, in proof of the assertion that the people will some day understand our art,

that some productions of so-called "classical" poetry, music, or painting, which formerly did not please the masses, do — now that they have been offered to them from all sides — begin to please these same masses; but this only shows that the crowd, especially the half-spoilt town crowd, can easily (its taste having been perverted) be accustomed to any sort of art. Moreover, this art is not produced by these masses, nor even chosen by them, but is energetically thrust upon them in those public places in which art is accessible to the people. For the great majority of working-people, our art, besides being inaccessible on account of its costliness, is strange in its very nature, transmitting, as it does, the feelings of people far removed from those conditions of laborious life which are natural to the great body of humanity. That which is enjoyment to a man of the rich classes is incomprehensible, as a pleasure, to a working-man, and evokes in him, either no feeling at all, or only a feeling quite contrary to that which it evokes in an idle and satiated man. Such feelings as form the chief subjects of present-day art — say, for instance, honor,¹ patriotism, and amorousness — evoke in a working-man only bewilderment and contempt, or indignation. So that even if a possibility were given to the laboring classes, in their free time, to see, to read, and to hear all that forms the flower of contemporary art (as is done to some extent, in towns, by means of picture galleries, popular concerts, and libraries), the working-man (to the extent to which he is a laborer, and has not begun to pass into the ranks of those perverted by idleness) would be able to make nothing of our fine art, and if he did understand it, that which he understood would not elevate his soul, but would certainly, in most cases, pervert it. To thoughtful and sincere people there can, therefore, be no doubt that the art of our upper classes never can be the art of the whole people. But if art is an important matter, a spiritual blessing, essential for all men ("like religion," as the

¹ Dueling is still customary among the higher circles in Russia, as in other continental countries. — TR.

devotees of art are fond of saying), then it should be accessible to every one. And if, as in our day, it is not accessible to all men, then one of two things: either art is not the vital matter it is represented to be, or that art which we call art is not the real thing.

The dilemma is inevitable, and therefore clever and immoral people avoid it by denying one side of it, viz., denying that the common people have a right to art. These people simply and boldly speak out (what lies at the heart of the matter), and say that the participators in and utilizers of what, in their esteem, is highly beautiful art, *i.e.* art furnishing the greatest enjoyment, can only be "schöne Geister," "the elect," as the romantics called them, the "Uebermenschen," as they are called by the followers of Nietzsche; the remaining vulgar herd, incapable of experiencing these pleasures, must serve the exalted pleasures of this superior breed of people. The people who express these views at least do not pretend, and do not try, to combine the incombinable, but frankly admit, what is the case, that our art is an art of the upper classes only. So essentially art has been, and is, understood by every one engaged on it in our society.

CHAPTER IX

THE unbelief of the upper classes of the European world had this effect — that instead of an artistic activity aiming at transmitting the highest feelings to which humanity has attained, — those flowing from religious perception, — we have an activity which aims at affording the greatest enjoyment to a certain class of society. And of all the immense domain of art, that part has been fenced off, and is alone called art, which affords enjoyment to the people of this particular circle.

Apart from the moral effects on European society of such a selection from the whole sphere of art of what did not deserve such a valuation, and the acknowledgment of it as important art, this perversion of art has

weakened art itself, and well-nigh destroyed it. The first great result was that art was deprived of the infinite, varied, and profound religious subject-matter proper to it. The second result was that having only a small circle of people in view, it lost its beauty of form and became affected and obscure; and the third and chief result was that it ceased to be either natural or even sincere, and became thoroughly artificial and brain-spun.

The first result—the impoverishment of subject-matter—followed because only that is a true work of art which transmits fresh feelings not before experienced by man. As thought-product is only then real thought-product when it transmits new conceptions and thoughts, and does not merely repeat what was known before, so also an art-product is only then a genuine art-product when it brings a new feeling (however insignificant) into the current of human life. This explains why children and youths are so strongly impressed by those works of art which first transmit to them feelings they had not before experienced.

The same powerful impression is made on people by feelings which are quite new, and have never before been expressed by man. And it is the source from which such feelings flow of which the art of the upper classes has deprived itself by estimating feelings, not in conformity with religious perception, but according to the degree of enjoyment they afford. There is nothing older and more hackneyed than enjoyment, and there is nothing fresher than the feelings springing from the religious consciousness of each age. It could not be otherwise: man's enjoyment has limits established by his nature, but the movement forward of humanity, that which is voiced by religious perception, has no limits. At every forward step taken by humanity—and such steps are taken in consequence of the greater and greater elucidation of religious perception—men experience new and fresh feelings. And therefore only on the basis of religious perception (which shows the highest level of life-comprehension reached by the men of a certain period) can fresh emotion, never before felt

by man, arise. From the religious perception of the ancient Greeks flowed the really new, important, and endlessly varied feelings expressed by Homer and the tragic writers. It was the same among the Jews, who attained the religious conception of a single God, — from that perception flowed all those new and important emotions expressed by the prophets. It was the same for the poets of the Middle Ages, who if they believed in a heavenly hierarchy, believed also in the Catholic commune; and it is the same for a man of to-day who has grasped the religious conception of true Christianity, — the brotherhood of man.

The variety of fresh feelings flowing from religious perception is endless, and they are all new; for religious perception is nothing else than the first indication of that which is coming into existence, viz., the new relation of man to the world around him. But the feelings flowing from the desire for enjoyment are, on the contrary, not only limited, but were long ago experienced and expressed. And therefore the lack of belief of the upper classes of Europe has left them with an art fed on the poorest subject-matter.

The impoverishment of the subject-matter of upper-class art was further increased by the fact that, ceasing to be religious, it ceased also to be popular, and this again diminished the range of feelings which it transmitted. For the range of feelings experienced by the powerful and the rich, who have no experience of labor for the support of life, is far poorer, more limited, and more insignificant than the range of feelings natural to working-people.

People of our circle, æstheticians, usually think and say just the contrary of this. I remember how Gontchareff, the author, a very clever and educated man, but a thorough townsman and an æsthetician, said to me that after Tourgenieff's "Memoirs of a Sportsman" there was nothing left to write about in peasant life. It was all used up. The life of working-people seemed to him so simple that Tourgenieff's peasant stories had used up all there was to describe. The life of our wealthy

people, with their love-affairs and dissatisfaction with themselves, seemed to him full of inexhaustible subject-matter. One hero kissed his lady on her palm, another on her elbow, and a third somewhere else. One man is discontented through idleness, and another because people don't love him. And Gontchareff thought that in this sphere there is no end of variety. And this opinion — that the life of working-people is poor in subject-matter, but that our life, the life of the idle, is full of interest — is shared by very many people in our society. The life of a laboring man, with its endlessly varied forms of labor, and the dangers connected with this labor on sea and underground; his migrations, the intercourse with his employers, overseers, and companions, and with men of other religions and other nationalities; his struggles with nature and with wild beasts, the associations with domestic animals, the work in the forest, on the steppe, in the field, the garden, the orchard; his intercourse with wife and children, not only as with people near and dear to him, but as with co-workers and helpers in labor, replacing him in time of need; his concern in all economic questions, not as matters of display or discussion, but as problems of life for himself and his family; his pride in self-suppression and service to others, his pleasures of refreshment; and with all these interests permeated by a religious attitude toward these occurrences — all this to us, who have not these interests and possess no religious perception, seems monotonous in comparison with those small enjoyments and insignificant cares of our life, — a life, not of labor nor of production, but of consumption and destruction of that which others have produced for us. We think the feelings experienced by people of our day and our class are very important and varied; but in reality almost all the feelings of people of our class amount to but three very insignificant and simple feelings, — the feeling of pride, the feeling of sexual desire, and the feeling of weariness of life. These three feelings, with their outgrowths, form almost the only subject-matter of the art of the rich classes.

At first, at the very beginning of the separation of the exclusive art of the upper classes from universal art, its chief subject-matter was the feeling of pride. It was so at the time of the Renaissance and after it, when the chief subject of works of art was the laudation of the strong, — popes, kings, and dukes: odes and madrigals were written in their honor, and they were extolled in cantatas and hymns; their portraits were painted, and their statues carved, in various adulatory ways. Next, the element of sexual desire began more and more to enter into art, and (with very few exceptions, and in novels and dramas almost without exception) it has now become an essential feature of every art-product of the rich classes.

The third feeling transmitted by the art of the rich — that of discontent with life — appeared yet later in modern art. This feeling, which, at the commencement of the present century, was expressed only by exceptional men: by Byron, by Leopardi, and afterward by Heine, has latterly become fashionable, and is expressed by most ordinary and empty people. Most justly does the French critic Doumic characterize the works of the new writers: "*C'est la lassitude de vivre, le mépris de l'époque présente, le regret d'un autre temps aperçu à travers l'illusion de l'art, le goût du paradoxe, le besoin de se singulariser, une aspiration de raffinés vers la simplicité, l'adoration enfantine du merveilleux, la séduction malade de la rêverie, l'ébranlement des nerfs, — surtout l'appel exaspéré de la sensualité*" ("Les Jeunes," René Doumic).¹ And, as a matter of fact, of these three feelings it is sensuality, the lowest (accessible not only to all men, but even to all animals), which forms the chief subject-matter of works of art of recent times.

From Boccaccio to Marcel Prévost, all the novels,

¹ It is the weariness of life, contempt for the present epoch, regret for another age seen through the illusion of art, a taste for paradox, a desire to be singular, a sentimental aspiration after simplicity, an infantine adoration of the marvelous, a sickly tendency toward reverie, a shattered condition of nerves, and, above all, the exasperated demand of sensuality.

poems, and verses invariably transmit the feeling of sexual love in its different forms. Adultery is not only the favorite, but almost the only theme of all the novels. A performance is not a performance unless, under some pretense, women appear with naked busts and limbs. Songs and *romances* — all are expressions of lust, idealized in various degrees.

A majority of the pictures by French artists represent female nakedness in various forms. In recent French literature there is hardly a page or a poem in which nakedness is not described, and in which, relevantly or irrelevantly, their favorite thought and word *nu* is not repeated a couple of times. There is a certain writer, René de Gourmond, who gets printed, and is considered talented. To get an idea of the new writers, I read his novel, "Les Chevaux de Diomède." It is a consecutive and detailed account of the sexual connections some gentleman had with various women. Every page contains lust-kindling descriptions. It is the same in Pierre Louÿs' book, "Aphrodite," which met with success; it is the same in a book I lately chanced upon, Huysmans' "Certains," and, with but few exceptions, it is the same in all the French novels. They are all the productions of people suffering from erotic mania. And these people are evidently convinced that as their whole life, in consequence of their diseased condition, is concentrated on amplifying various sexual abominations, therefore the life of all the world is similarly concentrated. And these people, suffering from erotic mania, are imitated throughout the whole artistic world of Europe and America.

Thus in consequence of the lack of belief and the exceptional manner of life of the wealthy classes, the art of those classes became impoverished in its subject-matter, and has sunk to the transmission of the feelings of pride, discontent with life, and, above all, of sexual desire.

CHAPTER X

IN consequence of their unbelief, the art of the upper classes became poor in subject-matter. But besides that, becoming continually more and more exclusive, it became at the same time continually more and more involved, affected, and obscure.

When a universal artist (such as were some of the Grecian artists or the Jewish prophets) composed his work, he naturally strove to say what he had to say in such a manner that his production should be intelligible to all men. But when an artist composed for a small circle of people placed in exceptional conditions, or even for a single individual and his courtiers, — for popes, cardinals, kings, dukes, queens, or for a king's mistress, — he naturally only aimed at influencing these people, who were well known to him, and lived in exceptional conditions familiar to him. And this was an easier task, and the artist was involuntarily drawn to express himself by allusions comprehensible only to the initiated, and obscure to every one else. In the first place, more could be said in this way; and secondly, there is (for the initiated) even a certain charm in the cloudiness of such a manner of expression. This method, which showed itself both in euphemism and in mythological and historical allusions, came more and more into use, until it has, apparently, at last reached its utmost limits in the so-called art of the Decadents. It has come, finally, to this: that not only is haziness, mysteriousness, obscurity, and exclusiveness (shutting out the masses) elevated to the rank of a merit and a condition of poetic art, but even incorrectness, indefiniteness, and lack of eloquence are held in esteem.

Théophile Gautier, in his preface to the celebrated "*Fleurs du Mal*," says that Baudelaire, as far as possible, banished from poetry eloquence, passion, and truth too strictly copied ("*l'éloquence, la passion, et la vérité calquée trop exactement*").

And Baudelaire not only expressed this, but main-

tained his thesis in his verses, and yet more strikingly in the prose of his "Petits Poèmes en Prose," the meanings of which have to be guessed like a rebus, and remain for the most part undiscovered.

The poet Verlaine (who followed next after Baudelaire, and was also esteemed great) even wrote an "Art Poétique," in which he advises this style of composition:—

*De la musique avant toute chose,
Et pour cela préfère l'Impair
Plus vague et plus soluble dans l'air,
Sans rien en lui qui pèse ou qui pose.*

*Il faut aussi que tu n'aïlles point
Choisir tes mots sans quelque méprise:
Rien de plus cher que la chanson grise
Où l'Indécis au Précis se joint.*

* * * * *

And again:—

*De la musique encore et toujours!
Que ton vers soit la chose envolée
Qu'on sent qui fuit d'une âme en allée
Vers d'autres cieux à d'autres amours.*

*Que ton vers soit la bonne aventure
Éparse au vent crispé du matin,
Qui va fleurant la menthe et le thym ...
Et tout le reste est littérature.¹*

¹ Music, music before all things
The eccentric still prefer,
Vague in air, and nothing weighty,
Soluble. Yet do not err,

Choosing words; still do it lightly,
Do it too with some contempt;
Dearest is the song that's tipsy,
Clearness, dimness not exempt.

* * * * *

After these two comes Mallarmé, considered the most important of the young poets, and he plainly says that the charm of poetry lies in our having to guess its meaning—that in poetry there should always be a puzzle:—

Je pense qu'il faut qu'il n'y ait qu'allusion, says he. La contemplation des objets, l'image s'envolant des rêveries suscitées par eux, sont le chant: les Parnassiens, eux, prennent la chose entièrement et la montrent; par là ils manquent de mystère; ils retirent aux esprits cette joie délicieuse de croire qu'ils créent. Nommer un objet, c'est supprimer les trois quarts de la jouissance du poème, qui est faite du bonheur de deviner peu à peu: le suggérer, voilà le rêve. C'est le parfait usage de ce mystère qui constitue le symbole: évoquer petit à petit un objet pour montrer un état d'âme, ou, inversement, choisir un objet et en dégager un état d'âme, par une série de déchiffrements.

.... Si un être d'une intelligence moyenne, et d'une préparation littéraire insuffisante, ouvre par hasard un livre ainsi fait et prétend en jouir, il y a malentendu, il faut remettre les choses à leur place. Il doit y avoir toujours énigme en poésie, et c'est le but de la littérature, il n'y en a pas d'autre, — d'évoquer les objets. — " Enquête sur l'Évolution Littéraire," Jules Huret, pp. 60, 61.¹

Music always, now and ever
Be thy verse the thing that flies
From a soul that's gone, escaping,
Gone to other loves and skies.

Gone to other loves and regions,
Following fortunes that allure,
Mint and thyme and morning crispness
All the rest's mere literature.

¹ I think there should be nothing but allusions. The contemplation of objects, the flying image of reveries evoked by them, are the song. The Parnassiens state the thing completely, and show it, and thereby lack mystery; they deprive the mind of that delicious joy of imagining that it creates. To name an object is to take three-quarters from the enjoyment of the poem, which consists in the happiness of guessing little by little: to suggest, that is the dream. It is the perfect use of this mystery that constitutes the symbol: little by little, to evoke an object in order to show a

Thus is obscurity elevated into a dogma among the new poets. As the French critic Doumic (who has not yet accepted the dogma) quite correctly says:—

"Il serait temps aussi d'en finir avec cette fameuse 'théorie de l'obscurité' que la nouvelle école a élevée, en effet, à la hauteur d'un dogme."—"Les Jeunes, par René Doumic."¹

But it is not French writers only who think thus. The poets of all other countries think and act in the same way: German, and Scandinavian, and Italian, and Russian, and English. So also do the artists of the new period in all branches of art: in painting, in sculpture, and in music. Relying on Nietzsche and Wagner, the artists of the new age conclude that it is unnecessary for them to be intelligible to the vulgar crowd; it is enough for them to evoke poetic emotion in "the finest nurtured," to borrow a phrase from an English æsthetician.

In order that what I am saying may not seem to be mere assertion, I will quote at least a few examples from the French poets who have led this movement. The name of these poets is legion. I have taken French writers, because they, more decidedly than any others, indicate the new direction of art, and are imitated by most European writers.

Besides those whose names are already considered famous, such as Baudelaire and Verlaine, here are the names of a few of them: Jean Moréas, Charles Morice, Henri de Régnier, Charles Vignier, Adrien Remacle, René Ghil, Maurice Maeterlinck, G. Albert Aurier, Rémy de Gourmont, Saint-Pol-Roux-le-Magnifique, Georges Rodenbach, le comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac.

state of the soul; or, inversely, to choose an object, and from it to disengage a state of the soul by a series of decipherings.

.... If a being of mediocre intelligence and insufficient literary preparation chance to open a book made in this way and pretends to enjoy it, there is a misunderstanding—things must be returned to their places. *There should always be an enigma in poetry*, and the aim of literature—it has no other—is to evoke objects.

¹ It were time also to have done with this famous "theory of obscurity," which the new school have practically raised to the height of a dogma.

These are Symbolists and Decadents. Next we have the "Magi": Joséphin Péladan, Paul Adam, Jules Bois, M. Papus, and others.

Besides these, there are yet one hundred and forty-one others, whom Doumic mentions in the book referred to above.

Here are some examples from the work of those of them who are considered to be the best, beginning with that most celebrated man, acknowledged to be a great artist worthy of a monument — Baudelaire. This is a poem from his celebrated "Fleurs du Mal":—

No. XXIV

*Je t'adore à l'égal de la voûte nocturne,
O vase de tristesse, ô grande taciturne,
Et t'aime d'autant plus, belle, que tu me fuis,
Et que tu me parais, ornement de mes nuits,
Plus ironiquement accumuler les lieues
Qui séparent mes bras des immensités bleues.*

*Je m'avance à l'attaque, et je grimpe aux assauts,
Comme après un cadavre un cœur de vermisseaux,
Et je chéris, ô bête implacable et cruelle,
Jusqu'à cette froideur par où tu m'es plus belle !¹*

And this is another by the same writer:—

No. XXXVI

DUELLUM

*Deux guerriers ont couru l'un sur l'autre ; leurs armes
Ont éclaboussé l'air de lueurs et de sang.
Ces jeux, ces cliquetis du fer sont les vacarmes
D'une jeunesse en proie à l'amour vagissant.*

¹ For translation, see Appendix IV.

*Les glaives sont brisés ! comme notre jeunesse,
Ma chère ! Mais les dents, les ongles acérés,
Vengent bientôt l'épée et la dague traîtresse.
O fureur des cœurs mûrs par l'amour ulcérés !*

*Dans le ravin hanté des chats-pards et des onces
Nos héros, s'étreignant méchamment, ont roulé,
Et leur peau fleurira l'aridité des ronces.*

*Ce gouffre, c'est l'enfer, de nos amis peuplé !
Roulons-y sans remords, amazone inhumaine,
Afin d'éterniser l'ardeur de notre haine !¹*

To be exact, I should mention that the collection contains verses less comprehensible than these, but not one poem which is plain and can be understood without a certain effort — an effort seldom rewarded ; for the feelings which the poet transmits are evil and very low ones. And these feelings are always, and purposely, expressed by him with eccentricity and lack of clearness. This premeditated obscurity is especially noticeable in his prose, where the author could, if he liked, speak plainly.

Take, for instance, the first piece from his "Petits Poèmes" : —

L'ETRANGER

*Qui aimes-tu le mieux, homme énigmatique, dis ? ton
père, ta mère, ta sœur, ou ton frère ?*

Je n'ai ni père, ni mère, ni sœur, ni frère.

Tes amis ?

*Vous vous servez là d'une parole dont le sens m'est resté
jusqu'à ce jour inconnu.*

Ta patrie ?

J'ignore sous quelle latitude elle est située.

La beauté ?

Je l'aimerais volontiers, desse et immortelle.

L'or ?

Je le hais comme vous haïssez Dieu.

¹ For translation, see Appendix IV.

*Et qu'aimes-tu donc, extraordinaire étranger?
J'aime les nuages les nuages qui passent là bas,....
les merveilleux nuages !¹*

The piece called "La Soupe et les Nuages" is probably intended to express the unintelligibility of the poet even to her whom he loves. This is the piece in question : —

Ma petite folle bien-aimée me donnait à dîner, et par la fenêtre ouverte de la salle à manger je contemplais les mouvantes architectures que Dieu fait avec les vapeurs, les merveilleuses constructions de l'impalpable. Et je me disais, à travers ma contemplation : " Toutes ces fantasmagories sont presque aussi belles que les yeux de ma belle bien-aimée, la petite folle monstrueuse aux yeux verts."

Et tout à coup je reçus un violent coup de poing dans le dos, et j'entendis une voix rauque et charmante, une voix hystérique et comme enrouée par l'eau-de-vie, la voix de ma chère petite bien-aimée, qui me disait, " Allez-vous bientôt manger votre soupe, s b de marchand de nuages ? " ¹

However artificial these two pieces may be, it is still possible, with some effort, to guess at what the author meant them to express, but some of the pieces are absolutely incomprehensible — at least to me. "Le Galant Tireur" is a piece I was quite unable to understand.

LE GALANT TIREUR

Comme la voiture traversait le bois, il la fit arrêter dans le voisinage d'un tir, disant qu'il lui serait agréable de tirer quelques balles pour tuer le Temps. Tuer ce monstre-là, n'est-ce pas l'occupation la plus ordinaire et la plus légitime de chacun? — Et il offrit galamment la main à sa chère, délicieuse et exécrationnelle femme, à cette mystérieuse femme à laquelle il doit tant de plaisirs, tant de douleurs, et peut-être aussi une grande partie de son génie.

¹ For translation, see Appendix IV.

Plusieurs balles frappèrent loin du but proposé, l'une d'elles s'enfonça même dans le plafond; et comme la charmante créature riait follement, se moquant de la maladresse de son époux, celui-ci se tourna brusquement vers elle, et lui dit: "Observez cette poupée, là-bas, à droite, qui porte le nez en l'air et qui a la mine si hautaine. Eh bien! cher ange, je me figure que c'est vous." Et il ferma les yeux et il lâcha la détente. La poupée fut nettement décapitée.

Alors s'inclinant vers sa chère, sa délicieuse, son exécrationnelle femme, son inévitable et impitoyable Muse, et lui baisant respectueusement la main, il ajouta: "Ah! mon cher ange, combien je vous remercie de mon adresse!"¹

The productions of another celebrity, Verlaine, are not less affected and unintelligible. This, for instance, is the first poem in the section called "Ariettes Oubliés."

*"Le vent dans la plaine
Suspend son haleine." — FAVART.*

*C'est l'extase langoureuse,
C'est la fatigue amoureuse,
C'est tous les frissons des bois
Parmi l'étreinte des brises,
C'est, vers les ramures grises,
Le chœur des petites voix.*

*O le frêle et frais murmure!
Cela gazouille et susurre,
Cela ressemble au cri doux
Que l'herbe agitée expire
Tu dirais, sous l'eau qui vire,
Le roulis sourd des cailloux.*

*Cette âme qui se lamente
En cette plainte dormante
C'est la nôtre, n'est-ce pas ?*

¹For translation, see Appendix IV.

*La mienne, dis, et la tienne,
Dont s'exhale l'humble antienne
Par ce tiède soir, tout bas?*¹

What "*chœur des petites voix*"? and what "*cri doux que l'herbe agitée expire*"? and what it all means, remains altogether unintelligible to me.

And here is another "Ariette":—

VIII

*Dans l'interminable
Ennui de la plaine,
La neige incertaine
Luit comme du sable.*

*Le ciel est de cuivre,
Sans lueur aucune.
On croirait voir vivre —
Et mourir la lune.*

*Comme des nuées
Flottent gris les chênes
Des forêts prochaines
Parmi les buées.*

*Le ciel est de cuivre,
Sans lueur aucune.
On croirait voir vivre
Et mourir la lune.*

*Corneille poussive
Et vous, les loups maigres,
Par ces bises aigres
Quoi donc vous arrive?*

*Dans l'interminable
Ennui de la plaine,*

¹ For translation, see Appendix IV.

*La neige incertaine
Luit comme du sable.*¹

How does the moon seem to live and die in a copper heaven? And how can snow shine like sand? The whole thing is not merely unintelligible, but, under pretense of conveying an impression, it passes off a string of incorrect comparisons and words.

Besides these artificial and obscure poems there are others which are intelligible, but which make up for it by being altogether bad, both in form and in subject. Such are all the poems under the heading "La Sagesse." The chief place in these verses is occupied by a very poor expression of the most commonplace Roman Catholic and patriotic sentiments. For instance, one meets with verses such as this:—

*Je ne veux plus penser qu'à ma mère Marie,
Siège de la sagesse et source de pardons,
Mère de France aussi de qui nous attendons
Inébranlablement l'honneur de la patrie.*²

Before citing examples from other poets, I must pause to note the amazing celebrity of these two versifiers, Baudelaire and Verlaine, who are now accepted as being great poets. How the French, who had Chénier, Musset, Lamartine, and, above all, Hugo,—and among whom quite recently flourished the so-called Parnassiens: Leconte de Lisle, Sully-Prudhomme, etc.,—could attribute such importance to these two versifiers, who were far from skilful in form and most contemptible and commonplace in subject-matter, is to me incomprehensible. The conception of life of one of them, Baudelaire, consisted in elevating gross egotism into a theory, and replacing morality by a cloudy conception of beauty, and

¹ For translation, see Appendix IV.

² I do not wish to think any more, except about my mother Mary,
Seat of wisdom and source of pardon,
Also Mother of France, from whom we
Steadfastly expect the honor of our country.

especially artificial beauty. Baudelaire had a preference, which he expressed, for a woman's face painted rather than showing its natural color, and for metal trees and a theatrical imitation of water rather than real trees and real water.

The life-conception of the other, Verlaine, consisted in weak profligacy, confession of his moral impotence, and, as an antidote to that impotence, in the grossest Roman Catholic idolatry. Both, moreover, were quite lacking in naïveté, sincerity, and simplicity, and both overflowed with artificiality, forced originality and self-assurance. So that in their least bad productions one sees more of M. Baudelaire or M. Verlaine than of what they were describing. But these two indifferent versifiers form a school, and lead hundreds of followers after them.

There is only one explanation of this fact : it is that the art of the society in which these versifiers lived is not a serious, important matter of life, but is a mere amusement. And all amusements grow wearisome by repetition. And, in order to make wearisome amusement again tolerable, it is necessary to find some means to freshen it up. When, at cards, ombre grows stale, whist is introduced ; when whist grows stale, écarté is substituted ; when écarté grows stale, some other novelty is invented, and so on. The substance of the matter remains the same, only its form is changed. And so it is with this kind of art. The subject-matter of the art of the upper classes growing continually more and more limited, it has come at last to this, that to the artists of these exclusive classes it seems as if everything has already been said, and that to find anything new to say is impossible. And therefore, to freshen up this art, they look out for fresh forms.

Baudelaire and Verlaine invent such a new form, furbish it up, moreover, with hitherto unused pornographic details, and — the critics and the public of the upper classes hail them as great writers.

This is the only explanation of the success, not of Baudelaire and Verlaine only, but of all the Decadents.

For instance, there are poems by Mallarmé and Maeterlinck which have no meaning, and yet for all that, or perhaps on that very account, are printed by tens of thousands, not only in various publications, but even in collections of the best works of the younger poets.

This, for example, is a sonnet by Mallarmé:—

*A la nue accablante tu
Basse de basalte et de laves
A même les échos esclaves
Par une trompe sans vertu.*

*Quel sépulcral naufrage (tu
Le soir, écume, mais y baves)
Suprême une entre les épaves
Abolit le mât dévêtu.*

*Ou cela que furibond faute
De quelque perdition haute
Tout l'abîme vain éployé
Dans le si blanc cheveu qui traîne
Avarement aura noyé
Le flanc enfant d'une sirène.¹*

(“Pan,” 1895, No. 1.)

This poem is not exceptional in its incomprehensibility. I have read several poems by Mallarmé, and they also had no meaning whatever. I give a sample of his prose in Appendix I. There is a whole volume of this prose called “Divagations.” It is impossible to understand any of it. And that is evidently what the author intended.

And here is a song by Maeterlinck, another celebrated author of to-day:—

*Quand il est sorti,
(J'entendis la porte)*

¹ This sonnet seems too unintelligible for translation.—TR.

WHAT IS ART?

*Quand il est sorti
Elle avait souri*

*Mais quand il entra
(J'entendis la lampe)
Mais quand il entra
Une autre était là*

*Et j'ai vu la mort,
(J'entendis son âme)
Et j'ai vu la mort
Qui l'attend encore*

*On est venu dire,
(Mon enfant j'ai peur)
On est venu dire
Qu'il allait partir*

*Ma lampe allumée,
(Mon enfant j'ai peur)
Ma lampe allumée
Me suis approchée*

*A la première porte,
(Mon enfant j'ai peur)
A la première porte,
La flamme a tremblé*

*A la seconde porte,
(Mon enfant j'ai peur)
A la seconde porte,
La flamme a parlé*

*A la troisième porte,
(Mon enfant j'ai peur)
A la troisième porte,
La lumière est morte*

*Et s'il revenait un jour
Que faut-il lui dire ?*

*Dites-lui qu'on l'attendit
Jusqu'à s'en mourir*

*Et s'il demande où vous êtes
Que faut-il répondre ?
Donnez-lui mon anneau d'or
Sans rien lui répondre*

*Et s'il m'interroge alors
Sur la dernière heure ?
Dites lui que j'ai souri
De peur qu'il ne pleure*

*Et s'il m'interroge encore
Sans me reconnaître ?
Parlez-lui comme une sœur,
Il souffre peut-être*

*Et s'il veut savoir pourquoi
La salle est déserte ?
Montrez lui la lampe éteinte
Et la porte ouverte¹*

("Pan," 1895, No. 2.)

Who went out? Who came in? Who is speaking?
Who died?

I beg the reader to be at the pains of reading through the samples I cite in Appendix II. of the celebrated and esteemed young poets — Griffin, Verhaeren, Moréas, and Montesquiou. It is important to do so in order to form a clear conception of the present position of art, and not to suppose, as many do, that Decadentism is an accidental and transitory phenomenon. To avoid the reproach of having selected the worst verses, I have copied out of each volume the poem which happened to stand on page 28.

All the other productions of these poets are equally unintelligible, or can only be understood with great

¹ For translation, see Appendix IV.

difficulty, and then not fully. All the productions of those hundreds of poets, of whom I have named a few, are the same in kind. And among the Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, Italians, and us Russians, similar verses are printed. And such productions are printed and made up into book form, if not by the million, then by the hundred thousand (some of these works sell in tens of thousands). For type-setting, paging, printing, and binding these books, millions and millions of working days are spent—not less, I think, than went to build the great pyramid. And this is not all. The same is going on in all the other arts: millions and millions of working days are being spent on the production of equally incomprehensible works in painting, in music, and in the drama.

Painting not only does not lag behind poetry in this matter, but rather outstrips it. Here is an extract from the diary of an amateur of art, written when visiting the Paris exhibitions in 1894:—

“I was to-day at three exhibitions: the Symbolists’, the Impressionists’, and the Neo-Impressionists’. I looked at the pictures conscientiously and carefully, but again felt the same stupefaction and ultimate indignation. The first exhibition, that of Camille Pissarro, was comparatively the most comprehensible, though the pictures were out of drawing, had no subject, and the colorings were most improbable. The drawing was so indefinite that you were sometimes unable to make out which way an arm or a head was turned. The subject was generally ‘*effets*’ — *Effet de brouillard*, *Effet du soir*, *Soleil couchant*. There were some pictures with figures, but without subjects.

“In the coloring, bright blue and bright green predominated. And each picture had its special color, with which the whole picture was, as it were, splashed. For instance, in ‘A Girl Guarding Geese,’ the special color is *vert de gris*, and dots of it were splashed about everywhere; on the face, the hair, the hands, and the clothes. In the same gallery — ‘Durand Ruel’ — were other pictures by Puvis de Chavannes, Manet, Monet, Renoir,

Sisley — who are all Impressionists. One of them, whose name I could not make out, — it was something like Redon, — had painted a blue face in profile. On the whole face there is only this blue tone, with white-of-lead. Pissarro has a water-color all done in dots. In the foreground is a cow, entirely painted with various-colored dots. The general color cannot be distinguished, however much one stands back from, or draws near to, the picture. From there I went to see the Symbolists. I looked at them long without asking any one for an explanation, trying to guess the meaning; but it is beyond human comprehension. One of the first things to catch my eye was a wooden *haut-relief*, wretchedly executed, representing a woman (naked) who with both hands is squeezing from her two breasts streams of blood. The blood flows down, becoming lilac in color. Her hair first descends, and then rises again, and turns into trees. The figure is all colored yellow, and the hair is brown.

“Next — a picture: a yellow sea, on which swims something which is neither a ship nor a heart; on the horizon is a profile with a halo and yellow hair, which changes into a sea, in which it is lost. Some of the painters lay on their colors so thickly that the effect is something between painting and sculpture. A third exhibit was even less comprehensible: a man’s profile; before him a flame and black stripes — leeches, as I was afterwards told. At last I asked a gentleman who was there what it meant, and he explained to me that the *haut-relief* was a symbol, and that it represented ‘*La Terre*.’ The heart swimming in a yellow sea was ‘*Illusion perdue*,’ and the gentleman with the leeches ‘*Le Mal*.’ There were also some Impressionist pictures: elementary profiles, holding some sort of flowers in their hands: in monotone, out of drawing, and either quite blurred or else marked out with wide black outlines.”

This was in 1894; the same tendency is now even more strongly defined, and we have Böcklin, Stuck, Klinger, Sasha Schneider, and others.

The same thing is taking place in the drama. The play-writers give us an architect who, for some reason, has not fulfilled his former high intentions, and who consequently climbs on to the roof of a house he has erected, and tumbles down head foremost; or an incomprehensible old woman (who exterminates rats), and who, for an unintelligible reason, takes a poetic child to the sea, and there drowns him; or some blind men who, sitting on the seashore, for some reason always repeat one and the same thing; or a bell of some kind, which flies into a lake, and there rings.

And the same is happening in music—in that art which, more than any other, one would have thought, should be intelligible to everybody.

An acquaintance of yours, a musician of repute, sits down to the piano and plays you what he says is a new composition of his own, or of one of the new composers. You hear the strange, loud sounds, and admire the gymnastic exercises performed by his fingers; and you see that the performer wishes to impress upon you that the sounds he is producing express various poetic strivings of the soul. You see his intention, but no feeling whatever is transmitted to you except weariness. The execution lasts long, or at least it seems very long to you, because you do not receive any clear impression, and involuntarily you remember the words of Alphonse Karr, "*Plus ça va vite, plus ça dure longtemps.*"¹ And it occurs to you that perhaps it is all a mystification; perhaps the performer is trying you—just throwing his hands and fingers wildly about the keyboard in the hope that you will fall into the trap and praise him, and then he will laugh and confess that he only wanted to see if he could hoax you. But when at last the piece does finish, and the perspiring and agitated musician rises from the piano evidently anticipating praise, you see that it was all done in earnest.

The same thing takes place at all the concerts, with pieces by Liszt, Wagner, Berlioz, Brahms, and (newest of all) Richard Strauss, and the numberless other com-

¹ The quicker it goes the longer it lasts.

posers of the new school, who unceasingly produce opera after opera, symphony after symphony, piece after piece.

The same is occurring in a domain in which it seemed hard to be unintelligible, — in the sphere of novels and short stories.

Read “*Là Bas*,” by Huysmans, or some of Kipling’s short stories, or “*L’Annonciateur*,” by Villiers de l’Isle Adam in his “*Contes Cruels*,” etc., and you will find them not only “abscons” (to use a word adopted by the new writers), but absolutely unintelligible both in form and in substance. Such, again, is the work by E. Morel, “*Terre Promise*,” now appearing in the *Revue Blanche*, and such are most of the new novels. The style is very high-flown, the feelings seem to be most elevated, but you can’t make out what is happening, to whom it is happening, and where it is happening. And such is the bulk of the young art of our time.

People who grew up in the first half of this century, admiring Goethe, Schiller, Musset, Hugo, Dickens, Beethoven, Chopin, Raphael, da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Delaroche, being unable to make head or tail of this new art, simply attribute its productions to tasteless insanity, and wish to ignore them. But such an attitude toward this new art is quite unjustifiable, because, in the first place, that art is spreading more and more, and has already conquered for itself a firm position in society, similar to the one occupied by the Romanticists in the third decade of this century; and, secondly and chiefly, because, if it is permissible to judge in this way of the productions of the latest form of art, called by us Decadent art, merely because we do not understand it, then remember there are an enormous number of people, — all the laborers, and many of the non-laboring folk, — who, in just the same way, do not comprehend those productions of art which we consider admirable: the verses of our favorite artists — Goethe, Schiller, and Hugo; the novels of Dickens, the music of Beethoven and Chopin, the pictures of Raphael, Michael Angelo, da Vinci, etc.

If I have a right to think that great masses of people do not understand and do not like what I consider undoubtedly good because they are not sufficiently developed, then I have no right to deny that perhaps the reason why I cannot understand and cannot like the new productions of art is merely that I am still insufficiently developed to understand them. If I have a right to say that I, and the majority of people who are in sympathy with me, do not understand the productions of the new art, simply because there is nothing in it to understand, and because it is bad art, then, with just the same right, the still larger majority, the whole laboring mass, who do not understand what I consider admirable art, can say that what I reckon as good art is bad art, and there is nothing in it to understand.

I once saw the injustice of such condemnation of the new art with especial clearness, when, in my presence, a certain poet, who writes incomprehensible verses, ridiculed incomprehensible music with gay self-assurance; and, shortly afterwards, a certain musician, who composes incomprehensible symphonies, laughed at incomprehensible poetry with equal self-confidence. I have no right, and no authority, to condemn the new art on the ground that I (a man educated in the first half of the century) do not understand it; I can only say that it is incomprehensible to me. The only advantage the art I acknowledge has over the Decadent art, lies in the fact that the art I recognize is comprehensible to a somewhat larger number of people than the present-day art.

The fact that I am accustomed to a certain exclusive art, and can understand it, but am unable to understand another still more exclusive art, does not give me a right to conclude that my art is the real true art, and that the other one, which I do not understand, is an unreal, a bad art. I can only conclude that art, becoming ever more and more exclusive, has become more and more incomprehensible to an ever increasing number of people, and that, in this its progress toward greater and greater incomprehensibility (on one

level of which I am standing, with the art familiar to me), it has reached a point where it is understood by a very small number of the elect, and the number of these chosen people is ever becoming smaller and smaller.

As soon as ever the art of the upper classes separated itself from universal art, a conviction arose that art may be art and yet be incomprehensible to the masses. And as soon as this position was admitted, it had inevitably to be admitted also that art may be intelligible only to the very smallest number of the elect, and, eventually, to two, or to one, of our nearest friends, or to oneself alone. Which is practically what is being said by modern artists: "I create and understand myself, and if any one does not understand me, so much the worse for him."

The assertion that art may be good art, and at the same time incomprehensible to a great number of people, is extremely unjust, and its consequences are ruinous to art itself; but at the same time it is so common and has so eaten into our conceptions, that it is impossible sufficiently to elucidate all the absurdity of it.

Nothing is more common than to hear it said of reputed works of art, that they are very good but very difficult to understand. We are quite used to such assertions, and yet to say that a work of art is good, but incomprehensible to the majority of men, is the same as saying of some kind of food that it is very good, but that most people can't eat it. The majority of men may not like rotten cheese or putrefying grouse — dishes esteemed by people with perverted tastes; but bread and fruit are only good when they please the majority of men. And it is the same with art. Perverted art may not please the majority of men, but good art always pleases every one.

It is said that the very best works of art are such that they cannot be understood by the mass, but are accessible only to the elect who are prepared to understand these great works. But if the majority of men

do not understand, the knowledge necessary to enable them to understand should be taught and explained to them. But it turns out that there is no such knowledge, that the works cannot be explained, and that those who say the majority do not understand good works of art, still do not explain those works, but only tell us that, in order to understand them, one must read, and see, and hear these same works over and over again. But this is not to explain, it is only to habituate! And people may habituate themselves to anything, even to the very worst things. As people may habituate themselves to bad food, to spirits, tobacco, and opium, just in the same way they may habituate themselves to bad art — and that is exactly what is being done.

Moreover, it cannot be said that the majority of people lack the taste to esteem the highest works of art. The majority always have understood, and still understand, what we also recognize as being the very best art: the epic of Genesis, the gospel parables, folk-legends, fairy-tales, and folk-songs, are understood by all. How can it be that the majority has suddenly lost its capacity to understand what is high in our art?

Of a speech it may be said that it is admirable, but incomprehensible to those who do not know the language in which it is delivered. A speech delivered in Chinese may be excellent, and may yet remain incomprehensible to me if I do not know Chinese; but what distinguishes a work of art from all other mental activity is just the fact that its language is understood by all, and that it infects all without distinction. The tears and laughter of a Chinese infect me just as the laughter and tears of a Russian; and it is the same with painting and music and poetry, when it is translated into a language I understand. The songs of a Kirghiz or of a Japanese touch me, though in a lesser degree than they touch a Kirghiz or a Japanese. I am also touched by Japanese painting, Indian architecture, and Arabian stories. If I am but little touched

by a Japanese song and a Chinese novel, it is not that I do not understand these productions, but that I know and am accustomed to higher works of art. It is not because their art is above me. Great works of art are only great because they are accessible and comprehensible to every one. The story of Joseph, translated into the Chinese language, touches a Chinese. The story of Sakya Muni touches us. And there are, and must be, buildings, pictures, statues, and music of similar power. So that, if art fails to move men, it cannot be said that this is due to the spectators' or hearers' lack of understanding; but the conclusion to be drawn may and should be, that such art is either bad art, or is not art at all.

Art is differentiated from activity of the understanding, which demands preparation and a certain sequence of knowledge (so that one cannot learn trigonometry before knowing geometry), by the fact that it acts on people independently of their state of development and education, that the charm of a picture, sounds, or of forms, infects any man whatever his plane of development.

The business of art lies just in this, — to make that understood and felt which, in the form of an argument, might be incomprehensible and inaccessible. Usually it seems to the recipient of a truly artistic impression that he knew the thing before but had been unable to express it.

And such has always been the nature of good, supreme art; the "Iliad," the "Odyssey," the stories of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, the Hebrew prophets, the psalms, the gospel parables, the story of Sakya Muni, and the hymns of the Vedas: all transmit very elevated feelings, and are nevertheless quite comprehensible now to us, educated or uneducated, as they were comprehensible to the men of those times, long ago, who were even less educated than our laborers. People talk about incomprehensibility; but if art is the transmission of feelings flowing from man's religious perception, how can a feeling be incomprehensible

which is founded on religion, *i.e.* on man's relation to God? Such art should be, and has actually always been, comprehensible to everybody, because every man's relation to God is one and the same. And therefore the churches and the images in them were always comprehensible to every one. The hindrance to understanding the best and highest feelings (as is said in the gospel) does not at all lie in deficiency of development or learning, but, on the contrary, in false development and false learning. A good and lofty work of art may be incomprehensible, but not to simple, unperverted peasant laborers (all that is highest is understood by them)—it may be, and often is, unintelligible to erudite, perverted people destitute of religion. And this continually occurs in our society, in which the highest feelings are simply not understood. For instance, I know people who consider themselves most refined, and who say that they do not understand the poetry of love to one's neighbor, of self-sacrifice, or of chastity.

So that good, great, universal, religious art may be incomprehensible to a small circle of spoilt people, but certainly not to any large number of plain men.

Art cannot be incomprehensible to the great masses only because it is very good—as artists of our day are fond of telling us. Rather we are bound to conclude that this art is unintelligible to the great masses only because it is very bad art, or even is not art at all. So that the favorite argument (naïvely accepted by the cultured crowd), that in order to feel art one has first to understand it (which really only means habituate oneself to it), is the truest indication that what we are asked to understand by such a method is either very bad, exclusive art, or is not art at all.

People say that works of art do not please the people because they are incapable of understanding them. But if the aim of works of art is to infect people with the emotion the artist has experienced, how can one talk about not understanding?

A man of the people reads a book, sees a picture,

hears a play or a symphony, and is touched by no feeling. He is told that this is because he cannot understand. People promise to let a man see a certain show; he enters and sees nothing. He is told that this is because his sight is not prepared for this show. But the man well knows that he sees quite well, and if he does not see what people promised to show him, he only concludes (as is quite just) that those who undertook to show him the spectacle have not fulfilled their engagement. And it is perfectly just for a man who does feel the influence of some works of art to come to this conclusion concerning artists who do not, by their works, evoke feeling in him. To say that the reason a man is not touched by my art is because he is still too stupid, besides being very self-conceited and also rude, is to reverse the rôles, and for the sick to send the hale to bed.

Voltaire said that "*Tous les genres sont bons, hors le genre ennuyeux*;"¹ but with even more right one may say of art that *Tous les genres sont bons, hors celui qu'on ne comprend pas, or qui ne produit pas son effet*,² for of what value is an article which fails to do that for which it was intended?

Mark this above all: if only it be admitted that art may be art and yet be unintelligible to any one of sound mind, there is no reason why any circle of perverted people should not compose works tickling their own perverted feelings and comprehensible to no one but themselves, and call it "art," as is actually being done by the so-called Decadents.

The direction art has taken may be compared to placing on a large circle other circles, smaller and smaller, until a cone is formed, the apex of which is no longer a circle at all. That is what has happened to the art of our times.

¹ All styles are good except the wearisome style.

² All styles are good except that which is not understood, or which fails to produce its effect.

CHAPTER XI

BECOMING ever poorer and poorer in subject-matter, and more and more unintelligible in form, the art of the upper classes, in its latest productions, has even lost all the characteristics of art, and has been replaced by imitations of art. Not only has upper-class art, in consequence of its separation from universal art, become poor in subject-matter, and bad in form, *i.e.* ever more and more unintelligible, it has, in course of time, ceased even to be art at all, and has been replaced by counterfeits.

This has resulted from the following causes: Universal art arises only when some one of the people, having experienced a strong emotion, feels the necessity of transmitting it to others. The art of the rich classes, on the other hand, arises not from the artist's inner impulse, but chiefly because people of the upper classes demand amusement and pay well for it. They demand from art the transmission of feelings that please them, and this demand artists try to meet. But it is a very difficult task; for people of the wealthy classes, spending their lives in idleness and luxury, desire to be continually diverted by art; and art, even the lowest, cannot be produced at will, but has to generate spontaneously in the artist's inner self. And therefore, to satisfy the demands of people of the upper classes, artists have had to devise methods of producing imitations of art. And such methods have been devised.

These methods are those of (1) borrowing, (2) imitating, (3) striking (effects), and (4) interesting.

The first method consists in borrowing whole subjects, or merely separate features, from former works recognized by every one as being poetical, and in so re-shaping them, with sundry additions, that they should have an appearance of novelty.

Such works, evoking in people of a certain class memories of artistic feelings formerly experienced, produce an impression similar to art, and, provided

only that they conform to other needful conditions, they pass for art among those who seek for pleasure from art. Subjects borrowed from previous works of art are usually called poetical subjects. Objects and people thus borrowed are called poetical objects and people. Thus, in our circle, all sorts of legends, sagas, and ancient traditions are considered poetical subjects. Among poetical people and objects we reckon maidens, warriors, shepherds, hermits, angels, devils of all sorts, moonlight, thunder, mountains, the sea, precipices, flowers, long hair, lions, lambs, doves, and nightingales. In general, all those objects are considered poetical which have been most frequently used by former artists in their productions.

Some forty years ago a stupid but highly cultured — *ayant beaucoup d'acquis* — lady (since deceased) asked me to listen to a novel written by herself. It began with a heroine who, in a poetic white dress, and with poetically flowing hair, was reading poetry near some water in a poetic wood. The scene was in Russia, but suddenly from behind the bushes the hero appears, wearing a hat with a feather *à la Guillaume Tell* (the book specially mentioned this) and accompanied by two poetical white dogs. The authoress deemed all this highly poetical, and it might have passed muster if only it had not been necessary for the hero to speak. But as soon as the gentleman in the hat *à la Guillaume Tell* began to converse with the maiden in the white dress, it became obvious that the authoress had nothing to say, but had merely been moved by poetic memories of other works, and imagined that by ringing the changes on those memories she could produce an artistic impression. But an artistic impression, *i.e.* infection, is only received when an author has, in the manner peculiar to himself, experienced the feeling which he transmits, and not when he passes on another man's feeling previously transmitted to him. Such poetry from poetry cannot infect people, it can only simulate a work of art, and even that only to people of perverted æsthetic taste. The lady in question being very stupid and devoid of

talent, it was at once apparent how the case stood ; but when such borrowing is resorted to by people who are erudite and talented and have cultivated the technique of their art, we get those borrowings from the Greek, the antique, the Christian or mythological world which have become so numerous, and which, particularly in our day, continue to increase and multiply, and are accepted by the public as works of art, if only the borrowings are well mounted by means of the technique of the particular art to which they belong.

As a characteristic example of such counterfeits of art in the realm of poetry, take Rostand's "*Princesse Lointaine*," in which there is not a spark of art, but which seems very poetical to many people, and probably also to its author.

The second method of imparting a semblance of art is that which I have called imitating. The essence of this method consists in supplying details accompanying the thing described or depicted. In literary art this method consists in describing, in the minutest details, the external appearance, the faces, the clothes, the gestures, the tones, and the habitations of the characters represented, with all the occurrences met with in life. For instance, in novels and stories, when one of the characters speaks, we are told in what voice he spoke, and what he was doing at the time. And the things said are not given so that they should have as much sense as possible, but, as they are in life, disconnectedly, and with interruptions and omissions. In dramatic art, besides such imitation of real speech, this method consists in having all the accessories and all the people just like those in real life. In painting, this method assimilates painting to photography, and destroys the difference between them. And, strange to say, this method is used also in music : music tries to imitate, not only by its rhythm but also by its very sounds, the sounds which in real life accompany the thing it wishes to represent.

The third method is by action, often purely physical, on the outer senses. Work of this kind is said to be "striking," "effective." In all arts these effects con-

sist chiefly in contrasts; in bringing together the terrible and the tender, the beautiful and the hideous, the loud and the soft, darkness and light, the most ordinary and the most extraordinary. In verbal art, besides effects of contrast, there are also effects consisting in the description of things that have never before been described. These are usually pornographic details evoking sexual desire, or details of suffering and death evoking feelings of horror, as, for instance, when describing a murder, to give a detailed medical account of the lacerated tissues, of the swellings, of the smell, quantity, and appearance of the blood. It is the same in painting: besides all kinds of other contrasts, one is coming into vogue which consists in giving careful finish to one object and being careless about all the rest. The chief and usual effects in painting are effects of light and the depiction of the horrible. In the drama, the most common effects, besides contrasts, are tempests, thunder, moonlight, scenes at sea or by the seashore, changes of costume, exposure of the female body, madness, murders, and death generally: the dying person exhibiting in detail all the phases of agony. In music the most usual effects are a *crescendo*, passing from the softest and simplest sounds to the loudest and most complex crash of the full orchestra; a repetition of the same sounds *arpeggio* in all the octaves and on various instruments; or that the harmony, tone, and rhythm be not at all those naturally flowing from the course of the musical thought, but such as strike one by their unexpectedness. Besides these, the commonest effects in music are produced in a purely physical manner by strength of sound, especially in an orchestra.

Such are some of the most usual effects in the various arts, but there yet remains one common to them all; namely, to convey by means of one art what it would be natural to convey by another: for instance, to make music describe (as is done by the programme music of Wagner and his followers), or to make painting, the drama, or poetry, induce a frame of mind (as is aimed at by all the Decadent art).

The fourth method is that of interesting (that is, absorbing the mind) in connection with works of art. The interest may lie in an intricate plot—a method till quite recently much employed in English novels and French plays, but now going out of fashion and being replaced by authenticity, *i.e.* by detailed description of some historical period or some branch of contemporary life. For example, in a novel, interestingness may consist in a description of Egyptian or Roman life, the life of miners, or that of the clerks in a large shop. The reader becomes interested and mistakes this interest for an artistic impression. The interest may also depend on the very method of expression; a kind of interest that has now come much into use. Both verse and prose, as well as pictures, plays, and music, are constructed so that they must be guessed like riddles, and this process of guessing again affords pleasure and gives a semblance of the feeling received from art.

It is very often said that a work of art is very good because it is poetic, or realistic, or striking, or interesting; whereas not only can neither the first, nor the second, nor the third, nor the fourth of these attributes supply a standard of excellence in art, but they have not even anything in common with art.

Poetic—means borrowed. All borrowing merely recalls to the reader, spectator, or listener some dim recollection of artistic impressions they have received from previous works of art, and does not infect them with feeling which the artist has himself experienced. A work founded on something borrowed, like Goethe's "Faust," for instance, may be very well executed and be full of mind and every beauty, but because it lacks the chief characteristic of a work of art—completeness, oneness, the inseparable unity of form and contents expressing the feeling the artist has experienced—it cannot produce a really artistic impression. In availing himself of this method, the artist only transmits the feeling received by him from a previous work of art; therefore every borrowing, whether it be of whole subjects, or of various scenes, situations, or descriptions, is

but a reflection of art, a simulation of it, but not art itself. And therefore, to say that a certain production is good because it is poetic — *i.e.* resembles a work of art — is like saying of a coin that it is good because it resembles real money.

Equally little can imitation, realism, serve, as many people think, as a measure of the quality of art. Imitation cannot be such a measure; for the chief characteristic of art is the infection of others with the feelings the artist has experienced, and infection with a feeling is not only not identical with description of the accessories of what is transmitted, but is usually hindered by superfluous details. The attention of the receiver of the artistic impression is diverted by all these well-observed details, and they hinder the transmission of feeling even when it exists.

To value a work of art by the degree of its realism, by the accuracy of the details reproduced, is as strange as to judge of the nutritive quality of food by its external appearance. When we appraise a work according to its realism, we only show that we are talking, not of a work of art, but of its counterfeit.

Neither does the third method of imitating art — by the use of what is striking or effectual — coincide with real art any better than the two former methods; for in effectfulness — the effects of novelty, of the unexpected, of contrasts, of the horrible — there is no transmission of feeling, but only an action on the nerves. If an artist were to paint a bloody wound admirably, the sight of the wound would strike me, but it would not be art. One prolonged note on a powerful organ will produce a striking impression, will often even cause tears, but there is no music in it, because no feeling is transmitted. Yet such physiological effects are constantly mistaken for art by people of our circle, and this not only in music, but also in poetry, painting, and the drama. It is said that art has become refined. On the contrary, thanks to the pursuit of effectfulness, it has become very coarse. A new piece is brought out and accepted all over Europe, such, for instance, as "Hannele," in

which play the author wishes to transmit to the spectators pity for a persecuted girl. To evoke this feeling in the audience by means of art, the author should either make one of the characters express this pity in such a way as to infect every one, or he should describe the girl's feelings correctly. But he cannot, or will not, do this, and chooses another way, more complicated in stage management, but easier for the author. He makes the girl die on the stage; and, still further to increase the physiological effect on the spectators, he extinguishes the lights in the theater, leaving the audience in the dark, and to the sound of dismal music he shows how the girl is pursued and beaten by her drunken father. The girl shrinks — screams — groans — and falls. Angels appear and carry her away. And the audience, experiencing some excitement while this is going on, are fully convinced that this is true æsthetic feeling. But there is nothing æsthetic in such excitement; for there is no infecting of man by man, but only a mingled feeling of pity for another, and of self-congratulation that it is not I who am suffering: it is like what we feel at the sight of an execution, or what the Romans felt in their circuses.

The substitution of effectfulness for æsthetic feeling is particularly noticeable in musical art — that art which by its nature has an immediate physiological action on the nerves. Instead of transmitting by means of a melody the feelings he has experienced, a composer of the new school accumulates and complicates sounds, and by now strengthening, now weakening them, he produces on the audience a physiological effect of a kind that can be measured by an apparatus invented for the purpose.¹ And the public mistake this physiological effect for the effect of art.

As to the fourth method — that of interesting — it also is frequently confounded with art. One often hears it said, not only of a poem, a novel, or a picture, but even

¹ An apparatus exists by means of which a very sensitive arrow, in dependence on the tension of a muscle of the arm, will indicate the physiological action of music on the nerves and muscles.

of a musical work, that it is interesting. What does this mean? To speak of an interesting work of art means either that we receive from a work of art information new to us, or that the work is not fully intelligible, and that little by little, and with effort, we arrive at its meaning, and experience a certain pleasure in this process of guessing it. In neither case has the interest anything in common with artistic impression. Art aims at infecting people with feeling experienced by the artist. But the mental effort necessary to enable the spectator, listener, or reader to assimilate the new information contained in the work, or to guess the puzzles propounded, by distracting him, hinders the infection. And therefore the interestingness of a work, not only has nothing to do with its excellence as a work of art, but rather hinders than assists artistic impression.

We may, in a work of art, meet with what is poetic, and realistic, and striking, and interesting, but these things cannot replace the essential of art, — feeling experienced by the artist. Latterly, in upper-class art, most of the objects given out as being works of art are of the kind which only resemble art, and are devoid of its essential quality, — feeling experienced by the artist. And, for the diversion of the rich, such objects are continually being produced in enormous quantities by the artisans of art.

Many conditions must be fulfilled to enable a man to produce a real work of art. It is necessary that he should stand on the level of the highest life-conception of his time, that he should experience feeling and have the desire and capacity to transmit it, and that he should, moreover, have a talent for some one of the forms of art. It is very seldom that all these conditions necessary to the production of true art are combined. But in order — aided by the customary methods of borrowing, imitating, introducing effects, and interesting — unceasingly to produce counterfeits of art which pass for art in our society and are well paid for, it is only necessary to have a talent for some branch of art; and this is very often to be met with. By talent I mean

ability: in literary art, the ability to express one's thoughts and impressions easily and to notice and remember characteristic details; in the depictive arts, to distinguish and remember lines, forms, and colors; in music, to distinguish the intervals, and to remember and transmit the sequence of sounds. And a man, in our times, if only he possesses such a talent and selects some specialty, may, after learning the methods of counterfeiting used in his branch of art,—if he has patience and if his æsthetic feeling (which would render such productions revolting to him) be atrophied,—unceasingly, till the end of his life, turn out works which will pass for art in our society.

To produce such counterfeits, definite rules or recipes exist in each branch of art. So that the talented man, having assimilated them, may produce such works *à froid*, cold drawn, without any feeling.

In order to write poems a man of literary talent needs only these qualifications: to acquire the knack, conformably with the requirements of rhyme and rhythm, of using, instead of the one really suitable word, ten others meaning approximately the same; to learn how to take any phrase which, to be clear, has but one natural order of words, and despite all possible dislocations still to retain some sense in it; and lastly, to be able, guided by the words required for the rhymes, to devise some semblance of thoughts, feelings, or descriptions to suit these words. Having acquired these qualifications, he may unceasingly produce poems—short or long, religious, amatory, or patriotic, according to the demand.

If a man of literary talent wishes to write a story or novel, he need only form his style—*i.e.* learn how to describe all that he sees—and accustom himself to remember or note down details. When he has accustomed himself to this, he can, according to his inclination or the demand, unceasingly produce novels or stories—historical, naturalistic, social, erotic, psychological, or even religious, for which latter kind a demand and fashion begins to show itself. He can take

subjects from books or from the events of life, and can copy the characters of the people in his book from his acquaintances.

And such novels and stories, if only they are decked out with well-observed and carefully noted details, preferably erotic ones, will be considered works of art, even though they may not contain a spark of feeling experienced.

To produce art in dramatic form, a talented man, in addition to all that is required for novels and stories, must also learn to furnish his characters with as many smart and witty sentences as possible, must know how to utilize theatrical effects, and how to entwine the action of his characters so that there should not be any long conversations, but as much bustle and movement on the stage as possible. If the writer is able to do this, he may produce dramatic works one after another without stopping, selecting his subjects from the reports of the law courts, or from the latest society topic, such as hypnotism, heredity, etc., or from deep antiquity, or even from the realms of fancy.

In the sphere of painting and sculpture it is still easier for the talented man to produce imitations of art. He need only learn to draw, paint, and model—especially naked bodies. Thus equipped he can continue to paint pictures, or model statues, one after another, choosing subjects according to his bent—mythological, or religious, or fantastic, or symbolical; or he may depict what is written about in the papers—a coronation, a strike, the Turko-Grecian war, famine scenes; or, commonest of all, he may just copy anything he thinks beautiful—from naked women to copper basins.

For the production of musical art the talented man needs still less of what constitutes the essence of art, *i.e.* feeling wherewith to infect others: but on the other hand, he requires more physical, gymnastic labor than for any other art, unless it be dancing. To produce works of musical art, he must first learn to move his fingers on some instrument as rapidly as those who

have reached the highest perfection; next, he must know how in former times polyphonic music was written, must study what are called counterpoint and fugue; and, furthermore, he must learn orchestration, *i.e.* how to utilize the effects of the instruments. But once he has learned all this, the composer may unceasingly produce one work after another; whether programme-music, opera, or song (devising sounds more or less corresponding to the words), or chamber music, *i.e.* he may take another man's themes and work them up into definite forms by means of counterpoint and fugue; or, what is commonest of all, he may compose fantastic music, *i.e.* he may take a conjunction of sounds which happens to come to hand, and pile every sort of complication and ornamentation on to this chance combination.

Thus, in all realms of art, counterfeits of art are manufactured to a ready-made, prearranged recipe, and these counterfeits the public of our upper classes accept for real art.

And this substitution of counterfeits for real works of art was the third and most important consequence of the separation of the art of the upper classes from universal art.

CHAPTER XII

IN our society three conditions coöperate to cause the production of objects of counterfeit art. They are — (1) the considerable remuneration of artists for their productions, and the professionalization of artists which this has produced, (2) art criticism, and (3) schools of art.

While art was as yet undivided, and only religious art was valued and rewarded while indiscriminate art was left unrewarded, there were no counterfeits of art, or, if any existed, being exposed to the criticism of the whole people, they quickly disappeared. But as soon as that division occurred, and the upper classes ac-

claimed every kind of art as good if only it afforded them pleasure, and began to reward such art more highly than any other social activity, immediately a large number of people devoted themselves to this activity, and art assumed quite a different character, and became a profession.

And as soon as this occurred, the chief and most precious quality of art—its sincerity—was at once greatly weakened and eventually quite destroyed.

The professional artist lives by his art, and has continually to invent subjects for his works, and does invent them. And it is obvious how great a difference must exist between works of art produced on the one hand by men such as the Jewish prophets, the authors of the Psalms, Francis of Assisi, the authors of the "Iliad" and "Odyssey," of folk-stories, legends, and folk-songs, many of whom not only received no remuneration for their work, but did not even attach their names to it; and, on the other hand, works produced by court poets, dramatists and musicians receiving honors and remuneration; and later on by professional artists, who lived by the trade, receiving remuneration from newspaper editors, publishers, impresarios, and in general from those agents who come between the artists and the town public—the consumers of art.

Professionalism is the first condition of the diffusion of false, counterfeit art.

The second condition is the growth, in recent times, of artistic criticism, *i.e.* the valuation of art, not by everybody, and, above all, not by plain men, but by erudite, that is, by perverted and at the same time self-confident individuals.

A friend of mine, speaking of the relation of critics to artists, half jokingly defined it thus: "Critics are the stupid who discuss the wise." However partial, inexact, and rude this definition may be, it is yet partly true, and is incomparably juster than the definition which considers critics to be men who can explain works of art.

"Critics explain!" What do they explain?

The artist, if a real artist, has by his work transmitted

to others the feeling he experienced. What is there, then, to explain?

If a work be good as art, then the feeling expressed by the artist — be it moral or immoral — transmits itself to other people. If transmitted to others, then they feel it, and all interpretations are superfluous. If the work does not infect people, no explanation can make it contagious. An artist's work cannot be interpreted. Had it been possible to explain in words what he wished to convey, the artist would have expressed himself in words. He expressed it by his art only because the feeling he experienced could not be otherwise transmitted. The interpretation of works of art by words only indicates that the interpreter is himself incapable of feeling the infection of art. And this is actually the case; for, however strange it may seem to say so, critics have always been people less susceptible than other men to the contagion of art. For the most part they are able writers, educated and clever, but with their capacity of being infected by art quite perverted or atrophied. And therefore their writings have always largely contributed, and still contribute, to the perversion of the taste of that public which reads them and trusts them.

Artistic criticism did not exist — could not and cannot exist — in societies where art is undivided, and where, consequently, it is appraised by the religious understanding of life common to the whole people. Art criticism grew, and could grow, only on the art of the upper classes, who did not acknowledge the religious perception of their time.

Universal art has a definite and indubitable internal criterion, — religious perception; upper-class art lacks this, and therefore the appreciators of that art are obliged to cling to some external criterion. And they find it in "the judgments of the finest-nurtured," as an English æsthetician has phrased it, that is, in the authority of the people who are considered educated, nor in this alone, but also in a tradition of such authorities. This tradition is extremely misleading, both because the opinions of "the finest-nurtured" are often mistaken,

and also because judgments which were valid once cease to be so with the lapse of time. But the critics, having no basis for their judgments, never cease to repeat their traditions. The classical tragedians were once considered good, and therefore criticism considers them to be so still. Dante was esteemed a great poet, Raphael a great painter, Bach a great musician — and the critics, lacking a standard by which to separate good art from bad, not only consider these artists great, but regard all their productions as admirable and worthy of imitation. Nothing has contributed, and still contributes, so much to the perversion of art as these authorities set up by criticism. A man produces a work of art, like every true artist expressing in his own peculiar manner a feeling he has experienced. Most people are infected by the artist's feeling; and his work becomes known. Then criticism, discussing the artist, says that the work is not bad, but all the same the artist is not a Dante, nor a Shakespear, nor a Goethe, nor a Raphael, nor what Beethoven was in his last period. And the young artist sets to work to copy those who are held up for his imitation, and he produces not only feeble works, but false works, — counterfeits of art.

Thus, for instance, our Pushkin writes his short poems, "Evgeniy Onegin," "The Gipsies," and his stories — works all varying in quality, but all true art. But then, under the influence of false criticism extolling Shakespear, he writes "Boris Godunoff," a cold, brain-spun work, and this production is lauded by the critics, set up as a model, and imitations of it appear: "Minin," by Ostrovsky, and "Tsar Boris," by Alexée Tolstoï, and such imitations of imitations as crowd all literatures with insignificant productions. The chief harm done by the critics is this, — that themselves lacking the capacity to be infected by art (and that is the characteristic of all critics; for did they not lack this they could not attempt the impossible — the interpretation of works of art), they pay most attention to, and eulogize, brain-spun, invented works, and set these up as models worthy of imitation. That is the reason they so confidently extol, in literature,

the Greek tragedians, Dante, Tasso, Milton, Shakespear, Goethe (almost all he wrote), and, among recent writers, Zola and Ibsen; in music, Beethoven's last period, and Wagner. To justify their praise of these brain-spun, invented works, they devise entire theories (of which the famous theory of beauty is one); and not only dull but also talented people compose works in strict deference to these theories; and often even real artists, doing violence to their genius, submit to them.

Every false work extolled by the critics serves as a door through which the hypocrites of art at once crowd in.

It is solely due to the critics, who in our times still praise rude, savage, and, for us, often meaningless works of the ancient Greeks: Sophocles, Euripides, Æschylus, and especially Aristophanes; or, of modern writers, Dante, Tasso, Milton, Shakespear; in painting, all of Raphael, all of Michael Angelo, including his absurd "Last Judgment"; in music, the whole of Bach, and the whole of Beethoven, including his last period,—thanks only to them have the Ibsens, Mæterlincks, Verlaines, Mallarmés, Puvis de Chavannes, Klingers, Böcklins, Stucks, Schneiders; in music, the Wagners, Liszts, Berliozes, Brahmses, and Richard Strausses, etc., and all that immense mass of good-for-nothing imitators of these imitators, become possible in our day.

As a good illustration of the harmful influence of criticism, take its relation to Beethoven. Among his innumerable hasty productions written to order, there are, notwithstanding their artificiality of form, works of true art. But he grows deaf, cannot hear, and begins to write invented, unfinished works, which are consequently often meaningless and musically unintelligible. I know that musicians can imagine sounds vividly enough, and can almost hear what they read, but imaginary sounds can never replace real ones, and every composer must hear his production in order to perfect it. Beethoven, however, could not hear, could not perfect his work, and consequently published productions which are artistic ravings. But criticism, having once acknowledged him

to be a great composer, seizes on just these abnormal works with special gusto, and searches for extraordinary beauties in them. And, to justify its laudations (perverting the very meaning of musical art), it attributed to music the property of describing what it cannot describe. And imitators appear — an innumerable host of imitators of these abnormal attempts at artistic productions which Beethoven wrote when he was deaf.

Then Wagner appears, who at first in critical articles praises just Beethoven's last period, and connects this music with Schopenhauer's mystical theory that music is the expression of Will — not of separate manifestations of will objectivized on various planes, but its very essence — which is in itself as absurd as this music of Beethoven. And afterward he composes music of his own on this theory, in conjunction with another still more erroneous system of the union of all the arts. After Wagner yet new imitators appear, diverging yet further from art: Brahms, Richard Strauss, and others.

Such are the results of criticism. But the third condition of the perversion of art, namely, art schools, is almost more harmful still.

As soon as art became, not art for the whole people, but for a rich class, it became a profession; as soon as it became a profession, methods were devised to teach it; people who chose this profession of art began to learn these methods, and thus professional schools sprang up: classes of rhetoric or literature in the public schools, academies for painting, conservatoires for music, schools for dramatic art.

In these schools art is taught! But art is the transmission to others of a special feeling experienced by the artist. How can this be taught in schools?

No school can evoke feeling in a man, and still less can it teach him how to manifest it in the one particular manner natural to him alone. But the essence of art lies in these things.

The one thing these schools can teach is how to transmit feelings experienced by other artists in the way those other artists transmitted them. And this is

just what the professional schools do teach; and such instruction not only does not assist the spread of true art, but, on the contrary, by diffusing counterfeits of art, does more than anything else to deprive people of the capacity to understand true art.

In literary art people are taught how, without having anything they wish to say, to write a many-paged composition on a theme about which they have never thought, and, moreover, to write it so that it should resemble the work of an author admitted to be celebrated. This is taught in schools.

In painting, the chief training consists in learning to draw and paint from copies and models, the naked body chiefly (the very thing that is never seen, and which a man occupied with real art hardly ever has to depict), and to draw and paint as former masters drew and painted. The composition of pictures is taught by giving out themes similar to those which have been treated by former acknowledged celebrities.

So also in dramatic schools, the pupils are taught to recite monologues just as tragedians, considered celebrated, declaimed them.

It is the same in music. The whole theory of music is nothing but a disconnected repetition of those methods which the acknowledged masters of composition made use of.

I have elsewhere quoted the profound remark of the Russian artist Bruloff on art, but I cannot here refrain from repeating it, because nothing better illustrates what can and what cannot be taught in the schools. Once when correcting a pupil's study, Bruloff just touched it in a few places, and the poor dead study immediately became animated. "Why, you only touched it a *wee bit*, and it is quite another thing!" said one of the pupils. "Art begins where the *wee bit* begins," replied Bruloff, indicating by these words just what is most characteristic of art. The remark is true of all the arts, but its justice is particularly noticeable in the performance of music. That musical execution should be artistic, should be art, *i.e.* should infect, three chief

conditions must be observed, — there are many others needed for musical perfection; the transition from one sound to another must be interrupted or continuous; the sound must increase or diminish steadily; it must be blended with one and not with another sound; the sound must have this or that timbre, and much besides, — but take the three chief conditions; the pitch, the time, and the strength of the sound. Musical execution is only then art, only then infection, when the sound is neither higher nor lower than it should be, that is, when exactly the infinitely small center of the required note is taken; when that note is continued exactly as long as is needed; and when the strength of the sound is neither more nor less than is required. The slightest deviation of pitch in either direction, the slightest increase or decrease in time, or the slightest strengthening or weakening of the sound beyond what is needed, destroys the perfection and, consequently, the infectiousness of the work. So that the feeling of infection by the art of music, which seems so simple and so easily obtained, is a thing we receive only when the performer finds those infinitely minute degrees which are necessary to perfection in music. It is the same in all arts: a wee bit lighter, a wee bit darker, a wee bit higher, lower, to the right or the left — in painting; a wee bit weaker or stronger in intonation, or a wee bit sooner or later — in dramatic art; a wee bit omitted, over-emphasized, or exaggerated — in poetry, and there is no contagion. Infection is only obtained when an artist finds those infinitely minute degrees of which a work of art consists, and only to the extent to which he finds them. And it is quite impossible to teach people by external means to find these minute degrees; they can only be found when a man yields to his feeling. No instruction can make a dancer catch just the tact of the music, or a singer or a fiddler take exactly the infinitely minute center of his note, or a sketcher draw of all possible lines the only right one, or a poet find the only meet arrangement of the only suitable words. All this is found only by feeling.

And therefore schools may teach what is necessary in order to produce something resembling art, but not art itself.

The teaching of the schools stops there where the *wee bit* begins — consequently where art begins.

Accustoming people to something resembling art, disaccustoms them to the comprehension of real art. And that is how it comes about that none are more dull to art than those who have passed through the professional schools and been most successful in them. Professional schools produce an hypocrisy of art precisely akin to that hypocrisy of religion which is produced by theological colleges for training priests, pastors, and religious teachers generally. As it is impossible in a school to train a man so as to make a religious teacher of him, so it is impossible to teach a man how to become an artist.

Art schools are thus doubly destructive of art: first, in that they destroy the capacity to produce real art in those who have the misfortune to enter them and go through a seven or eight years' course; secondly, in that they generate enormous quantities of that counterfeit art which perverts the taste of the masses and overflows our world. In order that born artists may know the methods of the various arts elaborated by former artists, there should exist in all elementary schools such classes for drawing and music (singing) that, after passing through them, every talented scholar may, by using existing models accessible to all, be able to perfect himself in his art independently.

These three conditions — the professionalization of artists, art criticism, and art schools — have had this effect: that most people in our times are quite unable even to understand what art is, and accept as art the grossest counterfeits of it.

CHAPTER XIII

To what an extent people of our circle and time have lost the capacity to receive real art, and have become accustomed to accept as art things that have nothing in common with it, is best seen from the works of Richard Wagner, which have latterly come to be more and more esteemed, not only by the Germans, but also by the French and the English, as the very highest art, revealing new horizons to us.

The peculiarity of Wagner's music, as is known, consists in this, — that he considered that music should serve poetry, expressing all the shades of a poetical work.

The union of the drama with music, devised in the fifteenth century in Italy for the revival of what they imagined to have been the ancient Greek drama with music, is an artificial form which had, and has, success only among the upper classes, and that only when gifted composers, such as Mozart, Weber, Rossini, and others, drawing inspiration from a dramatic subject, yielded freely to the inspiration and subordinated the text to the music, so that in their operas the important thing to the audience was merely the music on a certain text, and not the text at all, which latter, even when it was utterly absurd, as, for instance, in the "Magic Flute," still did not prevent the music from producing an artistic impression.

Wagner wishes to correct the opera by letting music submit to the demands of poetry and unite with it. But each art has its own definite realm, which is not identical with the realm of other arts, but merely comes in contact with them; and therefore, if the manifestation of, I will not say several, but even of two arts — the dramatic and the musical — be united in one complete production, then the demands of the one art will make it impossible to fulfil the demands of the other, as has always occurred in the ordinary operas, where the dramatic art has submitted to, or rather yielded place to, the musical. Wagner wishes that musical art should

submit to dramatic art, and that both should appear in full strength. But this is impossible; for every work of art, if it be a true one, is an expression of intimate feelings of the artist, which are quite exceptional, and not like anything else. Such is a musical production, and such is a dramatic work, if they be true art. And therefore, in order that a production in the one branch of art should coincide with a production in the other branch, it is necessary that the impossible should happen: that two works from different realms of art should be absolutely exceptional, unlike anything that existed before, and yet should coincide, and be exactly alike.

And this cannot be, just as there cannot be two men, or even two leaves on a tree, exactly alike. Still less can two works from different realms of art, the musical and the literary, be absolutely alike. If they coincide, then either one is a work of art and the other a counterfeit, or both are counterfeits. Two live leaves cannot be exactly alike, but two artificial leaves may be. And so it is with works of art. They can only coincide completely when neither the one nor the other is art, but only cunningly devised semblances of it.

If poetry and music may be joined, as occurs in hymns, songs, and *romances* — (though even in these the music does not follow the changes of each verse of the text, as Wagner wants to, but the song and the music merely produce a coincident effect on the mind) — this occurs only because lyrical poetry and music have, to some extent, one and the same aim: to produce a mental condition and the conditions produced by lyrical poetry and by music can, more or less, coincide. But even in these conjunctions the center of gravity always lies in one of the two productions, so that it is one of them that produces the artistic impression while the other remains unregarded. And still less is it possible for such union to exist between epic or dramatic poetry and music.

Moreover, one of the chief conditions of artistic creation is the complete freedom of the artist from every kind of preconceived demand. And the necessity of adjusting his musical work to a work from another realm of

art is a preconceived demand of such a kind as to destroy all possibility of creative power; and therefore works of this kind, adjusted to one another, are, and must be, as has always happened, not works of art, but only imitations of art, like the music of a melodrama, signatures to pictures, illustrations, and librettos to operas.

And such are Wagner's productions. And a confirmation of this is to be seen in the fact that Wagner's new music lacks the chief characteristic of every true work of art; namely, such entirety and completeness that the smallest alteration in its form would disturb the meaning of the whole work. In a true work of art — poem, drama, picture, song, or symphony — it is impossible to extract one line, one scene, one figure, or one bar from its place and put it in another, without infringing the significance of the whole work; just as it is impossible, without infringing the life of an organic being, to extract an organ from one place and insert it in another. But in the music of Wagner's last period, with the exception of certain parts of little importance which have an independent musical meaning, it is possible to make all kinds of transpositions, putting what was in front behind, and *vice versa*, without altering the musical sense. And the reason why these transpositions do not alter the sense of Wagner's music is because the sense lies in the words and not in the music.

The musical score of Wagner's later operas is like what the result would be should one of those versifiers — of whom there are now many, with tongues so broken that they can write verses on any theme to any rhymes in any rhythm, which sound as if they had a meaning — conceive the idea of illustrating by his verses some symphony or sonata of Beethoven, or some ballade of Chopin, in the following manner. To the first bars, of one character, he writes verses corresponding in his opinion to those first bars. Next come some bars of a different character, and he also writes verses corresponding in his opinion to them, but with no internal connection with the first verses, and, moreover, without rhymes and without rhythm. Such a production, without the music,

would be exactly parallel in poetry to what Wagner's operas are in music, if heard without the words.

But Wagner is not only a musician, he is also a poet, or both together; and therefore, to judge of Wagner, one must know his poetry also — that same poetry which the music has to subserve. The chief poetical production of Wagner is "The Nibelung's Ring." This work has attained such enormous importance in our time, and has such influence on all that now professes to be art, that it is necessary for every one to-day to have some idea of it. I have carefully read through the four booklets which contain this work, and have drawn up a brief summary of it, which I give in Appendix III. I would strongly advise the reader (if he has not perused the poem itself, which would be the best thing to do) at least to read my account of it, so as to have an idea of this extraordinary work. It is a model work of counterfeit art, so gross as to be even ridiculous.

But we are told that it is impossible to judge of Wagner's works without seeing them on the stage. The Second Day of this drama, which, as I was told, is the best part of the whole work, was given in Moscow last winter, and I went to see the performance.

When I arrived the enormous theater was already filled from top to bottom. There were grand dukes, and the flower of the aristocracy, of the merchant class, of the learned, and of the middle-class official public. Most of them held the libretto, fathoming its meaning. Musicians — some of them elderly, gray-haired men — followed the music, score in hand. Evidently the performance of this work was an event of importance.

I was rather late, but I was told that the short prelude, with which the act begins, was of little importance, and that it did not matter having missed it. When I arrived, an actor sat on the stage amid decorations intended to represent a cave, and before something which was meant to represent a smith's forge. He was dressed in tricot-tights, with a cloak of skins, wore a wig and an artificial beard, and with white, weak genteel hands (his easy movements, and especially the shape of his stomach

and his lack of muscle revealed the actor) beat an impossible sword with an unnatural hammer in a way in which no one ever uses a hammer; and at the same time, opening his mouth in a strange way, he sang something incomprehensible. The music of various instruments accompanied the strange sounds which he emitted. From the libretto one was able to gather that the actor had to represent a powerful gnome, who lived in the cave, and who was forging a sword for Siegfried, whom he had reared. One could tell he was a gnome by the fact that the actor walked all the time bending the knees of his trico-covered legs. This gnome, still opening his mouth in the same strange way, long continued to sing or shout. The music meanwhile runs over something strange, like beginnings which are not continued and do not get finished. From the libretto one could learn that the gnome is telling himself about a ring which a giant had obtained, and which the gnome wishes to procure through Siegfried's aid, while Siegfried wants a good sword, on the forging of which the gnome is occupied. After this conversation or singing to himself has gone on rather a long time, other sounds are heard in the orchestra, also like something beginning and not finishing, and another actor appears, with a horn slung over his shoulder, and accompanied by a man running on all fours dressed up as a bear, whom he sets at the smith-gnome. The latter runs away without unbending the knees of his trico-covered legs. This actor with the horn represented the hero, Siegfried. The sounds which were emitted in the orchestra on the entrance of this actor were intended to represent Siegfried's character, and are called Siegfried's *leit-motiv*. And these sounds are repeated each time Siegfried appears. There is one fixed combination of sounds, or *leit-motiv*, for each character, and this *leit-motiv* is repeated every time the person whom it represents appears; and when any one is mentioned the *motiv* is heard which relates to that person. Moreover, each article also has its own *leit-motiv* or chord. There is a *motiv* of the ring, a *motiv* of the helmet, a *motiv* of the apple, a *motiv* of fire, spear, sword,

water, etc.; and as soon as the ring, helmet, or apple is mentioned, the *motiv* or chord of the ring, helmet, or apple is heard. The actor with the horn opens his mouth as unnaturally as the gnome, and long continues in a chanting voice to shout some words, and in a similar chant Mime (that is the gnome's name) answers something or other to him. The meaning of this conversation can only be discovered from the libretto; and it is that Siegfried was brought up by the gnome, and therefore, for some reason, hates him and always wishes to kill him. The gnome has forged a sword for Siegfried, but Siegfried is dissatisfied with it. From a ten-page conversation (by the libretto), lasting half an hour and conducted with the same strange openings of the mouth and chantings, it appears that Siegfried's mother gave birth to him in the wood, and that concerning his father all that is known is that he had a sword which was broken, the pieces of which are in Mime's possession, and that Siegfried does not know fear and wishes to go out of the wood. Mime, however, does not want to let him go. During the conversation the music never omits, at the mention of father, sword, etc., to sound the *motiv* of these people and things. After these conversations fresh sounds are heard—those of the god Wotan—and a wanderer appears. This wanderer is the god Wotan. Also dressed up in a wig, and also in tights, this god Wotan, standing in a stupid pose with a spear, thinks proper to recount what Mime must have known before, but what it is necessary to tell the audience. He does not tell it simply, but in the form of riddles which he orders himself to guess, staking his head (one does not know why) that he will guess right. Moreover, whenever the wanderer strikes his spear on the ground, fire comes out of the ground, and in the orchestra the sounds of spear and of fire are heard. The orchestra accompanies the conversation, and the *motiv* of the people and things spoken of are always artfully intermingled. Besides this the music expresses feelings in the most naïve manner: the terrible by sounds in the bass, the frivolous by rapid touches in the treble, etc.

The riddles have no meaning except to tell the audience what the *nibelungs* are, what the giants are, what the gods are, and what has happened before. This conversation also is chanted with strangely opened mouths and continues for eight libretto pages, and correspondingly long on the stage. After this the wanderer departs, and Siegfried returns and talks with Mime for thirteen pages more. There is not a single melody the whole of this time, but merely intertwinings of the *leit-motiv* of the people and things mentioned. The conversation tells that Mime wishes to teach Siegfried fear, and that Siegfried does not know what fear is. Having finished this conversation, Siegfried seizes one of the pieces of what is meant to represent the broken sword, saws it up, puts it on what is meant to represent the forge, melts it, and then forges it and sings: Heiho! heiho! heiho! Ho! ho! Aha! oho! aha! Heiaho! heiaho! heiaho! Ho! ho! Hahei! hoho! hahei! and Act I. finishes.

As far as the question I had come to the theater to decide was concerned, my mind was fully made up, as surely as on the question of the merits of my lady acquaintance's novel when she read me the scene between the loose-haired maiden in the white dress and the hero with two white dogs and a hat with a feather *à la Guillaume Tell*.

From an author who could compose such spurious scenes, outraging all æsthetic feeling, as those which I had witnessed, there was nothing to be hoped; it may safely be decided that all that such an author can write will be bad, because he evidently does not know what a true work of art is. I wished to leave, but the friends I was with asked me to remain, declaring that one could not form an opinion by that one act, and that the second would be better. So I stopped for the second act.

Act II., night. Afterward, dawn. In general, the whole piece is crammed with lights, clouds, moonlight, darkness, magic fires, thunder, etc.

The scene represents a wood, and in the wood there is a cave. At the entrance of the cave sits a third

actor in tights, representing another gnome. It dawns. Enter the god Wotan, again with a spear, and again in the guise of a wanderer. Again his sounds, together with fresh sounds of the deepest bass that can be produced. These latter indicate that the dragon is speaking. Wotan awakens the dragon. The same bass sounds are repeated, growing yet deeper and deeper. First the dragon says, "I want to sleep," but afterward he crawls out of the cave. The dragon is represented by two men; it is dressed in a green, scaly skin, waves a tail at one end, while at the other it opens a kind of crocodile's jaw that is fastened on, and from which flames appear. The dragon (who is meant to be dreadful, and may appear so to five-year-old children) speaks some words in a terribly bass voice. This is all so stupid, so like what is done in a booth at a fair, that it is surprising that people over seven years of age can witness it seriously; yet thousands of quasi-cultured people sit and attentively hear and see it, and are delighted.

Siegfried, with his horn, reappears, as does Mime also. In the orchestra the sounds denoting them are emitted, and they talk about whether Siegfried does or does not know what fear is. Mime goes away, and a scene commences which is intended to be most poetical. Siegfried, in his tights, lies down in a would-be beautiful pose, and alternately keeps silent and talks to himself. He ponders, listens to the song of birds, and wishes to imitate them. For this purpose he cuts a reed with his sword and makes a pipe. The dawn grows brighter and brighter; the birds sing. Siegfried tries to imitate the birds. In the orchestra is heard the imitation of birds, alternating with sounds corresponding to the words he speaks. But Siegfried does not succeed with his pipe-playing, so he plays on his horn instead. This scene is unendurable. Of music, *i.e.* of art serving as a means to transmit a state of mind experienced by the author, there is not even a suggestion. There is something that is absolutely unintelligible musically. In a musical sense a hope is continually experienced, followed by disap-

pointment, as if a musical thought were commenced only to be broken off. If there are something like musical commencements, these commencements are so short, so encumbered with complications of harmony and orchestration and with effects of contrast, are so obscure and unfinished, and what is happening on the stage meanwhile is so abominably false, that it is difficult even to perceive these musical snatches, let alone to be infected by them. Above all, from the very beginning to the very end, and in each note, the author's purpose is so audible and visible that one sees and hears neither Siegfried nor the birds, but only a limited, self-opinionated German, of bad taste and bad style, who has a most false conception of poetry, and who, in the rudest and most primitive manner, wishes to transmit to me these false and mistaken conceptions of his.

Every one knows the feeling of distrust and resistance which is always evoked by an author's evident predetermination. A narrator need only say in advance, Prepare to cry or to laugh, and you are sure neither to cry nor to laugh. But when you see that an author prescribes emotion at what is not touching, but only laughable or disgusting, and when you see, moreover, that the author is fully assured that he has captivated you, a painfully tormenting feeling results, similar to what one would feel if an old, deformed woman put on a ball-dress, and smilingly coquetted before you, confident of your approbation. This impression was strengthened by the fact that around me I saw a crowd of three thousand people, who not only patiently witnessed all this absurd nonsense, but even considered it their duty to be delighted with it.

I somehow managed to sit out the next scene also, in which the monster appears, to the accompaniment of his bass notes intermingled with the *motiv* of Siegfried; but after the fight with the monster, and all the roars, fires, and sword-wavings, I could stand no more of it, and escaped from the theater with a feeling of repulsion which, even now, I cannot forget.

Listening to this opera, I involuntarily thought of a

respected, wise, educated country laborer, — one, for instance, of those wise and truly religious men whom I know among the peasants, — and I pictured to myself the terrible perplexity such a man would be in were he to witness what I was seeing that evening.

What would he think if he knew of all the labor spent on such a performance, and saw that audience, those great ones of the earth, — old, bald-headed, gray-bearded men, whom he had been accustomed to respect, — sit silent and attentive, listening to and looking at all these stupidities for five hours on end? Not to speak of an adult laborer, one can hardly imagine even a child of over seven occupying himself with such a stupid, incoherent fairy tale.

And yet an enormous audience, the cream of the cultured upper classes, sits out five hours of this insane performance, and goes away imagining that by paying tribute to this nonsense it has acquired a fresh right to esteem itself advanced and enlightened.

I speak of the Moscow public. But what is the Moscow public? It is but a hundredth part of that public which, while considering itself most highly enlightened, esteems it a merit to have so lost the capacity of being infected by art, that not only can it witness this stupid sham without being revolted, but can even take delight in it.

In Bayreuth, where these performances were first given, people who consider themselves finely cultured assembled from the ends of the earth, spent, say one hundred pounds each, to see this performance, and for four days running they went to see and hear this nonsensical rubbish, sitting it out for six hours each day.

But why did people go, and why do they still go to these performances, and why do they admire them? The question naturally presents itself: How is the success of Wagner's works to be explained?

That success I explain to myself in this way: thanks to his exceptional position in having at his disposal the resources of a king, Wagner was able to command all the methods for counterfeiting art which have been de-

veloped by long usage, and, employing these methods with great ability, he produced a model work of counterfeit art. The reason why I have selected his work for my illustration is, that in no other counterfeit of art known to me are all the methods by which art is counterfeited — namely, borrowings, imitation, effects, and interestingness — so ably and powerfully united.

From the subject, borrowed from antiquity, to the clouds and the risings of the sun and moon, Wagner, in this work, has made use of all that is considered poetical. We have here the sleeping beauty, and nymphs, and subterranean fires, and gnomes, and battles, and swords, and love, and incest, and a monster, and singing-birds — the whole arsenal of the poetical is brought into action.

Moreover, everything is imitative; the decorations are imitated, and the costumes are imitated. All are just as, according to the data supplied by archæology, they would have been in antiquity. The very sounds are imitative; for Wagner, who was not destitute of musical talent, invented just such sounds as imitate the strokes of a hammer, the hissing of molten iron, the singing of birds, etc.

Furthermore, in this work everything is in the highest degree striking in its effects and in its peculiarities: its monsters, its magic fires, and its scenes under water; the darkness in which the audience sit, the invisibility of the orchestra, and the hitherto unemployed combinations of harmony.

And besides, it is all interesting. The interest lies not only in the question who will kill whom, and who will marry whom, and who is whose son, and what will happen next? — the interest lies also in the relation of the music to the text. The rolling waves of the Rhine — now how is that to be expressed in music? An evil gnome appears — how is the music to express an evil gnome? — and how is it to express the sensuality of this gnome? How will bravery, fire, or apples be expressed in music? How are the *leit-motiv* of the people speaking to be interwoven with the *leit-motiv* of the

people and objects about whom they speak? Besides, the music has a further interest. It diverges from all formerly accepted laws, and most unexpected and totally new modulations crop up (as is not only possible, but even easy in music having no inner law of its being); the dissonances are new, and are allowed in a new way—and this, too, is interesting.

And it is this poeticality, imitativeness, effectfulness, and interestingness which, thanks to the peculiarities of Wagner's talent, and to the advantageous position in which he was placed, are in these productions carried to the highest pitch of perfection, that so act on the spectator, hypnotizing him as one would be hypnotized who should listen for several consecutive hours to the ravings of a maniac pronounced with great oratorical power.

People say: "You cannot judge without having seen Wagner performed at Bayreuth: in the dark, where the orchestra is out of sight concealed under the stage, and where the performance is brought to the highest perfection." And this just proves that we have here no question of art, but one of hypnotism. It is just what the spiritualists say. To convince you of the reality of their apparitions they usually say, "You cannot judge; you must try it, be present at several séances," *i.e.* come and sit silent in the dark for hours together in the same room with semi-sane people, and repeat this some ten times over, and you shall see all that we see.

Yes, naturally! Only place yourself in such conditions, and you may see what you will. But this can be still more quickly attained by getting drunk or smoking opium. It is the same when listening to an opera of Wagner's. Sit in the dark for four days in company with people who are not quite normal, and, through the auditory nerves, subject your brain to the strongest action of the sounds best adapted to excite it, and you will no doubt be reduced to an abnormal condition, and be enchanted by absurdities. But to attain this end you do not even need four days; the five hours during which one "day" is enacted, as in Moscow, are quite enough.

Nor are five hours needed; even one hour is enough for people who have no clear conception of what art should be, and who have come to the conclusion in advance that what they are going to see is excellent, and that indifference or dissatisfaction with this work will serve as a proof of their inferiority and lack of culture.

I observed the audience present at this representation. The people who led the whole audience and gave the tone to it were those who had previously been hypnotized, and who again succumbed to the hypnotic influence to which they were accustomed. These hypnotized people, being in an abnormal condition, were perfectly enraptured. Moreover, all the art critics, who lack the capacity to be infected by art and therefore always especially prize works like Wagner's opera where it is all an affair of the intellect, also, with much profundity, expressed their approval of a work affording such ample material for ratiocination. And following these two groups went that large city crowd (indifferent to art, with their capacity to be infected by it perverted and partly atrophied), headed by the princes, millionaires, and art patrons, who, like sorry harriers, keep close to those who most loudly and decidedly express their opinion.

"Oh, yes, certainly! What poetry! Marvelous! Especially the birds!" "Yes, yes! I am quite vanquished!" exclaim these people, repeating in various tones what they have just heard from men whose opinion appears to them authoritative.

If some people do feel insulted by the absurdity and spuriousness of the whole thing, they are timidly silent, as sober men are timid and silent when surrounded by tipsy ones.

And thus, thanks to the masterly skill with which it counterfeits art while having nothing in common with it, a meaningless, coarse, spurious production finds acceptance all over the world, costs millions of roubles to produce, and assists more and more to pervert the taste of people of the upper classes and their conception of what is art.

CHAPTER XIV

I KNOW that most men—not only those considered clever, but even those who are very clever, and capable of understanding most difficult scientific, mathematical, or philosophic problems—can very seldom discern even the simplest and most obvious truth if it be such as to oblige them to admit the falsity of conclusions they have formed, perhaps with much difficulty—conclusions of which they are proud, which they have taught to others, and on which they have built their lives. And therefore I have little hope that what I adduce as to the perversion of art and taste in our society will be accepted or even seriously considered. Nevertheless, I must state fully the inevitable conclusion to which my investigation into the question of art has brought me. This investigation has brought me to the conviction that almost all that our society considers to be art, good art, and the whole of art, far from being real and good art, and the whole of art, is not even art at all, but only a counterfeit of it. This position, I know, will seem very strange and paradoxical; but if we once acknowledge art to be a human activity by means of which some people transmit their feelings to others (and not a service of Beauty, nor a manifestation of the Idea, and so forth), we shall inevitably have to admit this further conclusion also. If it is true that art is an activity by means of which one man, having experienced a feeling, intentionally transmits it to others, then we have inevitably to admit further, that of all that among us is termed the art of the upper classes—of all those novels, stories, dramas, comedies, pictures, sculptures, symphonies, operas, operettas, ballets, etc., which profess to be works of art—scarcely one in a hundred thousand proceeds from an emotion felt by its author, all the rest being but manufactured counterfeits of art, in which borrowing, imitating, effects, and interestingness replace the contagion of feeling. That the proportion of real productions of art is to the counterfeits as one to some hundreds of thousands or

even more, may be seen by the following calculation. I have read somewhere that the artist painters in Paris alone number 30,000; there will probably be as many in England, as many in Germany, and as many in Russia, Italy, and the smaller states combined. So that in all there will be in Europe, say, 120,000 painters; and there are probably as many musicians and as many literary artists. If these 360,000 individuals produce three works a year each (and many of them produce ten or more), then each year yields over a million so-called works of art. How many, then, must have been produced in the last ten years, and how many in the whole time since upper-class art broke off from the art of the whole people? Evidently millions. Yet who of all the connoisseurs of art has received impressions from all these pseudo works of art? Not to mention all the laboring classes who have no conception of these productions, even people of the upper classes cannot know one in a thousand of them all, and cannot remember those they have known. These works all appear under the guise of art, produce no impression on any one (except when they serve as pastimes for the idle crowd of rich people), and vanish utterly.

In reply to this it is usually said that without this enormous number of unsuccessful attempts we should not have the real works of art. But such reasoning is as though a baker, in reply to a reproach that his bread was bad, were to say that if it were not for the hundreds of spoiled loaves there would not be any well-baked ones. It is true that where there is gold there is also much sand; but that cannot serve as a reason for talking a lot of nonsense in order to say something wise.

We are surrounded by productions considered artistic. Thousands of verses, thousands of poems, thousands of novels, thousands of dramas, thousands of pictures, thousands of musical pieces, follow one after another. All the verses describe love, or nature, or the author's state of mind, and in all of them rhyme and rhythm are observed. All the dramas and comedies are splendidly mounted and are performed by admirably trained

actors. All the novels are divided into chapters; all of them describe love, contain effective situations, and correctly describe the details of life. All the symphonies contain *allegro*, *andante*, *scherzo*, and *finale*; all consist of modulations and chords, and are played by highly trained musicians. All the pictures, in gold frames, saliently depict faces and sundry accessories. But among these productions in the various branches of art, there is in each branch one among hundreds of thousands, not only somewhat better than the rest, but differing from them as a diamond differs from paste. The one is priceless, the others not only have no value, but are worse than valueless, for they deceive and pervert taste. And yet, externally, they are, to a man of perverted or atrophied artistic perception, precisely alike.

In our society the difficulty of recognizing real works of art is further increased by the fact that the external quality of the work in false productions is not only no worse, but often better, than in real ones; the counterfeit is often more effective than the real, and its subject more interesting. How is one to discriminate? How is one to find a production in no way distinguished in externals from hundreds of thousands of others intentionally made to imitate it precisely?

For a country peasant of unperturbed taste this is as easy as it is for an animal of unspoilt scent to follow the trace he needs among a thousand others in wood or forest. The animal unerringly finds what he needs. So also the man, if only his natural qualities have not been perverted, will, without fail, select from among thousands of objects the real work of art he requires,—that infecting him with the feeling experienced by the artist. But it is not so with those whose taste has been perverted by their education and life. The receptive feeling for art of these people is atrophied, and in valuing artistic productions they must be guided by discussion and study, which discussion and study completely confuse them. So that most people in our society are quite unable to distinguish a work of art from the

grossest counterfeit. People sit for whole hours in concert-rooms and theaters listening to the new composers, consider it a duty to read the novels of the famous modern novelists, and to look at pictures representing either something incomprehensible, or just the very things they see much better in real life; and, above all, they consider it incumbent on them to be enraptured by all this, imagining it all to be art, while at the same time they will pass real works of art by, not only without attention, but even with contempt, merely because, in their circle, these works are not included in the list of works of art.

A few days ago I was returning home from a walk feeling depressed, as occurs sometimes. On nearing the house I heard the loud singing of a large choir of peasant women. They were welcoming my daughter, celebrating her return home after her marriage. In this singing, with its cries and clanging of scythes, such a definite feeling of joy, cheerfulness, and energy was expressed, that, without noticing how it infected me, I continued my way toward the house in a better mood, and reached home smiling, and quite in good spirits. That same evening, a visitor, an admirable musician, famed for his execution of classical music, and particularly of Beethoven, played us Beethoven's sonata, Opus 101. For the benefit of those who might otherwise attribute my judgment of that sonata of Beethoven to non-comprehension of it, I should mention that, whatever other people understand of that sonata and of other productions of Beethoven's later period, I, being very susceptible to music, equally understood. For a long time I used to attune myself so as to delight in those shapeless improvisations which form the subject-matter of the works of Beethoven's later period, but I had only to consider the question of art seriously, and to compare the impression I received from Beethoven's later works with those pleasant, clear, and strong musical impressions which are transmitted, for instance, by the melodies of Bach (his arias), Haydn, Mozart, Chopin, (when his melodies are not overloaded with complica-

tions and ornamentation), and of Beethoven himself in his earlier period, and, above all, with the impressions produced by folk-songs, — Italian, Norwegian, or Russian, — by the Hungarian *tsardas*, and other such simple, clear, and powerful music, and the obscure, almost unhealthy excitement from Beethoven's later pieces that I had artificially evoked in myself was immediately destroyed.

On the completion of the performance (though it was noticeable that every one had become dull) those present, in the accepted manner, warmly praised Beethoven's profound production, and did not forget to add that formerly they had not been able to understand that last period of his, but that they now saw that he was really then at his very best. And when I ventured to compare the impression made on me by the singing of the peasant women — an impression which had been shared by all who heard it — with the effect of this sonata, the admirers of Beethoven only smiled contemptuously, not considering it necessary to reply to such strange remarks.

But, for all that, the song of the peasant women was real art, transmitting a definite and strong feeling; while the 101st sonata of Beethoven was only an unsuccessful attempt at art, containing no definite feeling, and therefore not infectious.

For my work on art I have this winter read diligently, though with great effort, the celebrated novels and stories, praised by all Europe, written by Zola, Bourget, Huysmans, and Kipling. At the same time I chanced on a story in a child's magazine, and by a quite unknown writer, which told of the Easter preparations in a poor widow's family. The story tells how the mother managed with difficulty to obtain some wheat-flour, which she poured on the table ready to knead. She then went out to procure some yeast, telling the children not to leave the hut, and to take care of the flour. When the mother had gone, some other children ran shouting near the window, calling those in the hut to come to play. The children forgot their mother's warning, ran into the

street, and were soon engrossed in the game. The mother, on her return with the yeast, finds a hen on the table throwing the last of the flour to her chickens, who were busily picking it out of the dust of the earthen floor. The mother, in despair, scolds the children, who cry bitterly. And the mother begins to feel pity for them—but the white flour has all gone. So to mend matters she decides to make the Easter cake with sifted rye-flour, brushing it over with white of egg, and surrounding it with eggs. "Rye-bread which we bake is akin to any cake," says the mother, using a rhyming proverb to console the children for not having an Easter cake made with white flour. And the children, quickly passing from despair to rapture, repeat the proverb and await the Easter cake more merrily even than before.

Well! the reading of the novels and stories by Zola, Bourget, Huysmans, Kipling, and others, handling the most harrowing subjects, did not touch me for one moment, and I was provoked with the authors all the while, as one is provoked with a man who considers you so naïve that he does not even conceal the trick by which he intends to take you in. From the first lines you see the intention with which the book is written, and the details all become superfluous, and one feels dull. Above all, one knows that the author had no other feeling all the time than a desire to write a story or a novel, and so one receives no artistic impression. On the other hand, I could not tear myself away from the unknown author's tale of the children and the chickens, because I was at once infected by the feeling which the author had evidently experienced, reëvoked in himself, and transmitted.

Vasnetsoff is one of our Russian painters. He has painted ecclesiastical pictures in Kieff Cathedral, and every one praises him as the founder of some new, elevated kind of Christian art. He worked at those pictures for ten years, was paid tens of thousands of roubles for them, and they are all simply bad imitations of imitations of imitations, destitute of any

spark of feeling. And this same Vasnetsoff drew a picture for Tourgenieff's story, "The Quail" (in which it is told how, in his son's presence, a father killed a quail and felt pity for it), showing the boy asleep with pouting upper lip, and above him, as a dream, the quail. And this picture is a true work of art.

In the English Academy of 1897 two pictures were exhibited together; one of which, by J. C. Dolman, was the temptation of St. Anthony. The saint is on his knees praying. Behind him stands a naked woman and animals of some kind. It is apparent that the naked woman pleased the artist very much, but that Anthony did not concern him at all; and that, so far from the temptation being terrible to him (the artist) it is highly agreeable. And therefore if there be any art in this picture, it is very nasty and false. Next in the same book of academy pictures comes a picture by Langley, showing a stray beggar-boy, who has evidently been called in by a woman who has taken pity on him. The boy, pitifully drawing his bare feet under the bench, is eating; the woman is looking on, probably considering whether he will not want some more; and a girl of about seven, leaning on her arm, is carefully and seriously looking on, not taking her eyes from the hungry boy, and evidently understanding for the first time what poverty is, and what inequality among people is, and asking herself why she has everything provided for her while this boy goes barefoot and hungry? She feels sorry, and yet pleased. And she loves both the boy and goodness. And one feels that the artist loved this girl, and that she too loves. And this picture, by an artist who, I think, is not very widely known, is an admirable and true work of art.

I remember seeing a performance of "Hamlet" by Rossi. Both the tragedy itself and the performer who took the chief part are considered by our critics to represent the climax of supreme dramatic art. And yet, both from the subject-matter of the drama and from the performance, I experienced all the time that peculiar suffering which is caused by false imitations

of works of art. And I lately read of a theatrical performance among the savage tribe, the Voguls. A spectator describes the play. A big Vogul and a little one, both dressed in reindeer skins, represent a reindeer-doe and its young. A third Vogul, with a bow, represents a huntsman on snow-shoes, and a fourth imitates with his voice a bird that warns the reindeer of their danger. The play is that the huntsman follows the track that the doe with its young one has traveled. The deer run off the scene, and again reappear. (Such performances take place in a small tent-house.) The huntsman gains more and more on the pursued. The little deer is tired, and presses against its mother. The doe stops to draw breath. The hunter comes up with them and draws his bow. But just then the bird sounds its note, warning the deer of their danger. They escape. Again there is a chase, and again the hunter gains on them, catches them, and lets fly his arrow. The arrow strikes the young deer. Unable to run, the little one presses against its mother. The mother licks its wound. The hunter draws another arrow. The audience, as the eye-witness describes them, are paralyzed with suspense; deep groans and even weeping is heard among them. And, from the mere description, I felt that this was a true work of art.

What I am saying will be considered irrational paradox, at which one can only be amazed; but for all that I must say what I think; namely, that people of our circle, of whom some compose verses, stories, novels, operas, symphonies, and sonatas, paint all kinds of pictures and make statues, while others hear and look at these things, and again others appraise and criticize it all, discuss, condemn, triumph, and raise monuments to one another, generation after generation, — that all these people, with very few exceptions, artists, and public, and critics, have never (except in childhood and earliest youth, before hearing any discussions on art) experienced that simple feeling familiar to the plainest man and even to a child, that sense of infection with another's feeling, — compel-

ling us to joy in another's gladness, to sorrow at another's grief, and to mingle souls with another, — which is the very essence of art. And therefore these people not only cannot distinguish true works of art from counterfeits, but continually mistake for real art the worst and most artificial, while they do not even perceive works of real art, because the counterfeits are always more ornate, while true art is modest.

CHAPTER XV

ART, in our society, has been so perverted that not only has bad art come to be considered good, but even the very perception of what art really is has been lost. In order to be able to speak about the art of our society, it is, therefore, first of all necessary to distinguish art from counterfeit art.

There is one indubitable indication distinguishing real art from its counterfeit, namely, the infectiousness of art. If a man, without exercising effort and without altering his standpoint, on reading, hearing, or seeing another man's work, experiences a mental condition which unites him with that man and with other people who also partake of that work of art, then the object evoking that condition is a work of art. And however poetical, realistic, effectful, or interesting a work may be, it is not a work of art if it does not evoke that feeling (quite distinct from all other feelings) of joy, and of spiritual union with another (the author) and with others (those who are also infected by it).

It is true that this indication is an *internal* one, and that there are people who have forgotten what the action of real art is, who expect something else from art (in our society the great majority are in this state), and that therefore such people may mistake for this æsthetic feeling the feeling of divertimento and a certain excitement which they receive from counterfeits of art. But though it is impossible to undeceive these people, just as it is impossible to convince a man suffering from "Dalton-

ism" that green is not red, yet, for all that, this indication remains perfectly definite to those whose feeling for art is neither perverted nor atrophied, and it clearly distinguishes the feeling produced by art from all other feelings.

The chief peculiarity of this feeling is that the receiver of a true artistic impression is so united to the artist that he feels as if the work were his own and not some one else's, — as if what it expresses were just what he had long been wishing to express. A real work of art destroys, in the consciousness of the receiver, the separation between himself and the artist; nor that alone, but also between himself and all whose minds receive this work of art. In this freeing of our personality from its separation and isolation, in this uniting of it with others, lies the chief characteristic and the great attractive force of art.

If a man is infected by the author's condition of soul, if he feels this emotion and this union with others, then the object which has effected this is art; but if there be no such infection, if there be not this union with the author and with others who are moved by the same work — then it is not art. And not only is infection a sure sign of art, but the degree of infectiousness is also the sole measure of excellence in art.

The stronger the infection the better is the art; as art, speaking now apart from its subject-matter, i.e. not considering the quality of the feelings it transmits.

And the degree of the infectiousness of art depends on three conditions: —

(1) On the greater or lesser individuality of the feeling transmitted; (2) on the greater or lesser clearness with which the feeling is transmitted; (3) on the sincerity of the artist, *i.e.* on the greater or lesser force with which the artist himself feels the emotion he transmits.

The more individual the feeling transmitted the more strongly does it act on the receiver; the more individual the state of soul into which he is transferred the more pleasure does the receiver obtain, and therefore the more readily and strongly does he join in it.

The clearness of expression assists infection, because the receiver, who mingles in consciousness with the author, is the better satisfied the more clearly the feeling is transmitted, which, as it seems to him, he has long known and felt, and for which he has only now found expression.

But most of all is the degree of infectiousness of art increased by the degree of sincerity in the artist. As soon as the spectator, hearer, or reader feels that the artist is infected by his own production, and writes, sings, or plays for himself, and not merely to act on others, this mental condition of the artist infects the receiver; and, contrariwise, as soon as the spectator, reader, or hearer feels that the author is not writing, singing, or playing for his own satisfaction, — does not himself feel what he wishes to express, — but is doing it for him, the receiver, a resistance immediately springs up, and the most individual and the newest feelings and the cleverest technique not only fail to produce any infection, but actually repel.

I have mentioned three conditions of contagiousness in art, but they may be all summed up into one, the last, sincerity, *i.e.* that the artist should be impelled by an inner need to express his feeling. That condition includes the first; for if the artist is sincere he will express the feeling as he experienced it. And as each man is different from every one else, his feeling will be individual for every one else; and the more individual it is, — the more the artist has drawn it from the depths of his nature, — the more sympathetic and sincere will it be. And this same sincerity will impel the artist to find a clear expression of the feeling which he wishes to transmit.

Therefore this third condition — sincerity — is the most important of the three. It is always complied with in peasant art, and this explains why such art always acts so powerfully; but it is a condition almost entirely absent from our upper-class art, which is continually produced by artists actuated by personal aims of covetousness or vanity.

Such are the three conditions which divide art from its counterfeits, and which also decide the quality of every work of art apart from its subject-matter.

The absence of any one of these conditions excludes a work from the category of art and relegates it to that of art's counterfeits. If the work does not transmit the artist's peculiarity of feeling, and is therefore not individual, if it is unintelligibly expressed, or if it has not proceeded from the author's inner need for expression—it is not a work of art. If all these conditions are present, even in the smallest degree, then the work, even if a weak one, is yet a work of art.

The presence in various degrees of these three conditions—individuality, clearness, and sincerity—decides the merit of a work of art, as art, apart from subject-matter. All works of art take rank of merit according to the degree in which they fulfil the first, the second, and the third of these conditions. In one the individuality of the feeling transmitted may predominate; in another, clearness of expression; in a third, sincerity; while a fourth may have sincerity and individuality, but be deficient in clearness; a fifth, individuality and clearness, but less sincerity; and so forth, in all possible degrees and combinations.

Thus is art divided from not art, and thus is the quality of art, as art, decided, independently of its subject-matter, *i.e.* apart from whether the feelings it transmits are good or bad.

But how are we to define good and bad art with reference to its subject-matter?

CHAPTER XVI

How in art are we to decide what is good and what is bad in subject-matter?

Art, like speech, is a means of communication, and therefore of progress, *i.e.* of the movement of humanity forward toward perfection. Speech renders accessible to men of the latest generations all the knowledge dis

covered by the experience and reflection, both of preceding generations and of the best and foremost men of their own times; art renders accessible to men of the latest generations all the feelings experienced by their predecessors, and those also which are being felt by their best and foremost contemporaries. And as the evolution of knowledge proceeds by truer and more necessary knowledge dislodging and replacing what is mistaken and unnecessary, so the evolution of feeling proceeds through art, — feelings less kind and less needful for the well-being of mankind are replaced by others kinder and more needful for that end. That is the purpose of art. And, speaking now of its subject-matter, the more art fulfils that purpose the better the art, and the less it fulfils it the worse the art.

And the appraisalment of feelings (*i.e.* the acknowledgment of these or those feelings as being more or less good, more or less necessary for the well-being of mankind) is made by the religious perception of the age.

In every period of history, and in every human society, there exists an understanding of the meaning of life which represents the highest level to which men of that society have attained, — an understanding defining the highest good at which that society aims. And this understanding is the religious perception of the given time and society. And this religious perception is always clearly expressed by some advanced men, and more or less vividly perceived by all the members of the society. Such a religious perception and its corresponding expression exists always in every society. If it appears to us that in our society there is no religious perception, this is not because there really is none, but only because we do not want to see it. And we often wish not to see it because it exposes the fact that our life is inconsistent with that religious perception.

Religious perception in a society is like the direction of a flowing river. If the river flows at all, it must have a direction. If a society lives, there must be a religious perception indicating the direction in which, more or less consciously, all its members tend.

And so there always has been, and there is, a religious perception in every society. And it is by the standard of this religious perception that the feelings transmitted by art have always been estimated. Only on the basis of this religious perception of their age have men always chosen from the endlessly varied spheres of art that art which transmitted feelings making religious perception operative in actual life. And such art has always been highly valued and encouraged; while art transmitting feelings already outlived, flowing from the antiquated religious perceptions of a former age, has always been condemned and despised. All the rest of art, transmitting those most diverse feelings by means of which people commune together, was not condemned, and was tolerated, if only it did not transmit feelings contrary to religious perception. Thus, for instance, among the Greeks, art transmitting the feeling of beauty, strength, and courage (Hesiod, Homer, Phidias) was chosen, approved, and encouraged; while art transmitting feelings of rude sensuality, despondency, and effeminacy was condemned and despised. Among the Jews, art transmitting feelings of devotion and submission to the God of the Hebrews and to His will (the epic of Genesis, the prophets, the Psalms) was chosen and encouraged, while art transmitting feelings of idolatry (the golden calf) was condemned and despised. All the rest of art — stories, songs, dances, ornamentation of houses, of utensils, and of clothes — which was not contrary to religious perception, was neither distinguished nor discussed. Thus, in regard to its subject-matter, has art been appraised always and everywhere, and thus it should be appraised; for this attitude toward art proceeds from the fundamental characteristics of human nature, and those characteristics do not change.

I know that according to an opinion current in our times religion is a superstition which humanity has outgrown, and that it is therefore assumed that no such thing exists as a religious perception, common to us all, by which art, in our time, can be estimated. I know that this is the opinion current in the pseudo-cultured

circles of to-day. People who do not acknowledge Christianity in its true meaning because it undermines all their social privileges, and who, therefore, invent all kinds of philosophic and æsthetic theories to hide from themselves the meaninglessness and wrongness of their lives, cannot think otherwise. These people intentionally, or sometimes unintentionally, confusing the conception of a religious cult with the conception of religious perception, think that by denying the cult they get rid of religious perception. But even the very attacks on religion, and the attempts to establish a life-conception contrary to the religious perception of our times, most clearly demonstrate the existence of a religious perception condemning the lives that are not in harmony with it.

If humanity progresses, *i.e.* moves forward, there must inevitably be a guide to the direction of that movement. And religions have always furnished that guide. All history shows that the progress of humanity is accomplished not otherwise than under the guidance of religion. But if the race cannot progress without the guidance of religion,—and progress is always going on, and consequently also in our own times,—then there must be a religion of our times. So that, whether it pleases or displeases the so-called cultured people of to-day, they must admit the existence of religion,—not of a religious cult, Catholic, Protestant, or another, but of religious perception,—which, even in our times, is the guide always present where there is any progress. And if a religious perception exists amongst us, then our art should be appraised on the basis of that religious perception; and, as has always and everywhere been the case, art transmitting feelings flowing from the religious perception of our time should be chosen from all the indifferent art, should be acknowledged, highly esteemed, and encouraged; while art running counter to that perception should be condemned and despised, and all the remaining indifferent art should neither be distinguished nor encouraged.

The religious perception of our time, in its widest

and most practical application, is the consciousness that our well-being, both material and spiritual, individual and collective, temporal and eternal, lies in the growth of brotherhood among all men—in their loving harmony with one another. This perception is not only expressed by Christ and all the best men of past ages, it is not only repeated in the most varied forms and from most diverse sides by the best men of our own times, but it already serves as a clue to all the complex labor of humanity, consisting as this labor does, on the one hand, in the destruction of physical and moral obstacles to the union of men, and, on the other hand, in establishing the principles common to all men which can and should unite them into one universal brotherhood. And it is on the basis of this perception that we should appraise all the phenomena of our life, and, among the rest, our art also; choosing from all its realms whatever transmits feelings flowing from this religious perception, highly prizing and encouraging such art, rejecting whatever is contrary to this perception, and not attributing to the rest of art an importance not properly pertaining to it.

The chief mistake made by people of the upper classes of the time of the so-called Renaissance—a mistake which we still perpetuate—was not that they ceased to value and to attach importance to religious art (people of that period could not attach importance to it, because, like our own upper classes, they could not believe in what the majority considered to be religion), but their mistake was that they set up in place of religious art, which was lacking, an insignificant art which aimed only at giving pleasure, *i.e.* they began to choose, to value, and to encourage, in place of religious art, something which, in any case, did not deserve such esteem and encouragement.

One of the Fathers of the Church said that the great evil is, not that men do not know God, but that they have set up, instead of God, that which is not God. So also with art. The great misfortune of the people of the upper classes of our time is not so much that they

are without a religious art, as that, instead of a supreme religious art, chosen from all the rest as being specially important and valuable, they have chosen a most insignificant and, usually, harmful art, which aims at pleasing certain people, and which, therefore, if only by its exclusive nature, stands in contradiction to that Christian principle of universal union which forms the religious perception of our time. Instead of religious art, an empty and often vicious art is set up, and this hides from men's notice the need of that true religious art which should be present in life in order to improve it.

It is true that art which satisfies the demands of the religious perception of our time is quite unlike former art, but, notwithstanding this dissimilarity, to a man who does not intentionally hide the truth from himself, it is very clear and definite what does form the religious art of our age. In former times, when the highest religious perception united only some people (who, even if they formed a large society, were yet but one society surrounded by others — Jews, or Athenian or Roman citizens), the feelings transmitted by the art of that time flowed from a desire for the might, greatness, glory, and prosperity of that society, and the heroes of art might be people who contributed to that prosperity by strength, by craft, by fraud, or by cruelty (Ulysses, Jacob, David, Samson, Hercules, and all the heroes). But the religious perception of our times does not select any one society of men; on the contrary, it demands the union of all, — absolutely of all people without exception, — and above every other virtue it sets brotherly love to all men. And, therefore, the feelings transmitted by the art of our time not only cannot coincide with the feelings transmitted by former art, but must run counter to them.

Christian, truly Christian, art has been so long in establishing itself, and has not yet established itself, just because the Christian religious perception was not one of those small steps by which humanity advances regularly, but was an enormous revolution, which, if it has not already altered, must inevitably alter the entire life-con-

ception of mankind, and, consequently, the whole internal organization of their life. It is true that the life of humanity, like that of an individual, moves regularly; but in that regular movement come, as it were, turning-points, which sharply divide the preceding from the subsequent life. Christianity was such a turning-point; such, at least, it must appear to us who live by the Christian perception of life. Christian perception gave another, a new, direction to all human feelings, and therefore completely altered both the contents and the significance of art. The Greeks could make use of Persian art and the Romans could use Greek art, or, similarly, the Jews could use Egyptian art, — the fundamental ideals were one and the same. Now the ideal was the greatness and prosperity of the Persians, now the greatness and prosperity of the Greeks, now that of the Romans. The same art was transferred into other conditions, and served new nations. But the Christian ideal changed and reversed everything, so that, as the gospel puts it, "That which was exalted among men has become an abomination in the sight of God." The ideal is no longer the greatness of Pharaoh or of a Roman emperor, not the beauty of a Greek, nor the wealth of Phœnicia, but humility, purity, compassion, love. The hero is no longer Dives, but Lazarus the beggar; not Mary Magdalene in the day of her beauty, but in the day of her repentance; not those who acquire wealth, but those who have abandoned it; not those who dwell in palaces, but those who dwell in catacombs and huts; not those who rule over others, but those who acknowledge no authority but God's. And the greatest work of art is no longer a cathedral of victory¹ with statues of conquerors, but the representation of a human soul so transformed by love that a man who is tormented and murdered yet pities and loves his persecutors.

And the change is so great that men of the Christian world find it difficult to resist the inertia of the heathen art to which they have been accustomed all their lives.

¹ There is in Moscow a magnificent "Cathedral of our Saviour," erected to commemorate the defeat of the French in the war of 1812. — Tr.

The subject-matter of Christian religious art is so new to them, so unlike the subject-matter of former art, that it seems to them as though Christian art were a denial of art, and they cling desperately to the old art. But this old art, having no longer, in our day, any source in religious perception, has lost its meaning, and we shall have to abandon it whether we wish to or not.

The essence of the Christian perception consists in the recognition by every man of his sonship to God, and of the consequent union of men with God and with one another, as is said in the gospel (John xvii. 21¹). Therefore the subject-matter of Christian art is such feeling as can unite men with God and with one another.

The expression *unite men with God and with one another* may seem obscure to people accustomed to the misuse of these words which is so customary, but the words have a perfectly clear meaning nevertheless. They indicate that the Christian union of man (in contradiction to the partial, exclusive union of only some men) is that which unites all without exception.

Art, all art, has this characteristic, that it unites people. Every art causes those to whom the artist's feeling is transmitted to unite in soul with the artist, and also with all who receive the same impression. But non-Christian art, while uniting some people together, makes that very union a cause of separation between these united people and others; so that union of this kind is often a source, not only of division, but even of enmity toward others. Such is all patriotic art, with its anthems, poems, and monuments; such is all Church art, *i.e.* the art of certain cults, with their images, statues, processions, and other local ceremonies. Such art is belated and non-Christian art, uniting the people of one cult only to separate them yet more sharply from the members of other cults, and even to place them in relations of hostility to each other. Christian art is only such as tends to unite all without exception, either by evoking in them the perception that each man and all

¹ "That they may be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us."

men stand in like relation toward God and toward their neighbor, or by evoking in them identical feelings, which may even be the very simplest, provided only that they are not repugnant to Christianity and are natural to every one without exception.

Good Christian art of our time may be unintelligible to people because of imperfections in its form, or because men are inattentive to it, but it must be such that all men can experience the feelings it transmits. It must be the art, not of some one group of people, nor of one class, nor of one nationality, nor of one religious cult; that is, it must not transmit feelings which are accessible only to a man educated in a certain way, or only to an aristocrat, or a merchant, or only to a Russian, or a native of Japan, or a Roman Catholic, or a Buddhist, etc., but it must transmit feelings accessible to every one. Only art of this kind can be acknowledged in our time to be good art, worthy of being chosen out from all the rest of art and encouraged.

Christian art, *i.e.* the art of our time, should be catholic in the original meaning of the word, *i.e.* universal, and therefore it should unite all men. And only two kinds of feeling do unite all men: first, feelings flowing from the perception of our sonship to God and of the brotherhood of man; and next, the simple feelings of common life, accessible to every one without exception — such as the feeling of merriment, of pity, of cheerfulness, of tranquillity, etc. Only these two kinds of feelings can now supply material for art good in its subject-matter.

And the action of these two kinds of art, apparently so dissimilar, is one and the same. The feelings flowing from perception of our sonship to God and of the brotherhood of man — such as a feeling of sureness in truth, devotion to the will of God, self-sacrifice, respect for and love of man — evoked by Christian religious perception; and the simplest feelings — such as a softened or a merry mood caused by a song or an amusing jest intelligible to every one, or by a touching story, or a drawing, or a little doll: both alike produce one and the same effect, — the loving union of man with man. Some-

times people who are together are, if not hostile to one another, at least estranged in mood and feeling, till perchance a story, a performance, a picture, or even a building, but oftenest of all, music, unites them all as by an electric flash, and, in place of their former isolation or even enmity, they are all conscious of union and mutual love. Each is glad that another feels what he feels; glad of the communion established, not only between him and all present, but also with all now living who will yet share the same impression; and more than that, he feels the mysterious gladness of a communion which, reaching beyond the grave, unites us with all men of the past who have been moved by the same feelings, and with all men of the future who will yet be touched by them. And this effect is produced both by the religious art which transmits feelings of love to God and one's neighbor, and by universal art, transmitting the very simplest feelings common to all men.

The art of our time should be appraised differently from former art chiefly in this, that the art of our time, *i.e.* Christian art (basing itself on a religious perception which demands the union of man), excludes from the domain of art good in subject-matter everything transmitting exclusive feelings, which do not unite but divide men. It relegates such work to the category of art bad in its subject-matter, while, on the other hand, it includes in the category of art good in subject-matter a section not formerly admitted to deserve to be chosen out and respected, namely, universal art, transmitting even the most trifling and simple feelings if only they are accessible to all men without exception, and therefore unite them. Such art cannot, in our time, but be esteemed good, for it attains the end which the religious perception of our time, *i.e.* Christianity, sets before humanity.

Christian art either evokes in men those feelings which, through love of God and of one's neighbor, draw them to greater and ever greater union, and make them ready for and capable of such union; or evokes in them those feelings which show them that they are already united in the joys and sorrows of life. And therefore the Christian

art of our time can be and is of two kinds: (1) art transmitting feelings flowing from a religious perception of man's position in the world in relation to God and to his neighbor — religious art in the limited meaning of the term; and (2) art transmitting the simplest feelings of common life, but such, always, as are accessible to all men in the whole world — the art of common life — the art of a people — universal art. Only these two kinds of art can be considered good art in our time.

The first, religious art, — transmitting both positive feelings of love to God and one's neighbor, and negative feelings of indignation and horror at the violation of love, — manifests itself chiefly in the form of words, and to some extent also in painting and sculpture: the second kind (universal art), transmitting feelings accessible to all, manifests itself in words, in painting, in sculpture, in dances, in architecture, and, most of all, in music.

If I were asked to give modern examples of each of these kinds of art, then, as examples of the highest art, flowing from love of God and man (both of the higher, positive, and of the lower, negative kind), in literature I should name, "The Robbers," by Schiller; Victor Hugo's "Les Pauvres Gens" and "Les Misérables"; the novels and stories of Dickens, — "The Tale of Two Cities," "The Christmas Carol," "The Chimes," and others; "Uncle Tom's Cabin;" Dostoievsky's works — especially his "Memoirs from the House of Death"; and "Adam Bede," by George Eliot.

In modern painting, strange to say, works of this kind, directly transmitting the Christian feeling of love of God and of one's neighbor, are hardly to be found, especially among the works of the celebrated painters. There are plenty of pictures treating of the gospel stories; they, however, depict historical events with great wealth of detail, but do not, and cannot, transmit religious feeling not possessed by their painters. There are many pictures treating of the personal feelings of various people, but of pictures representing great deeds of self-sacrifice and of Christian love there are very few, and what there are, are principally by artists who are not celebrated,

and are, for the most part, not pictures, but merely sketches. Such, for instance, is the drawing by Kramskoy (worth many of his finished pictures), showing a drawing-room with a balcony, past which troops are marching in triumph on their return from the war. On the balcony stands a wet-nurse holding a baby and a boy. They are admiring the procession of the troops, but the mother, covering her face with a handkerchief, has fallen back on the sofa, sobbing. Such also is the picture by Walter Langley, to which I have already referred, and such again is a picture by the French artist Morlon, depicting a lifeboat hastening, in a heavy storm, to the relief of a steamer that is being wrecked. Approaching these in kind are pictures which represent the hard-working peasant with respect and love. Such are the pictures by Millet, and, particularly, his drawing, "The Man with the Hoe"; also pictures in this style by Jules Breton, L'Hermitte, Defregger, and others. As examples of pictures evoking indignation and horror at the violation of love to God and man, Gay's picture, "Judgment," may serve, and also Leizen-Mayer's, "Signing the Death Warrant." But there are also very few of this kind. Anxiety about the technique and the beauty of the picture for the most part obscures the feeling. For instance, Gérôme's "Pollice Verso" expresses, not so much horror at what is being perpetrated as attraction by the beauty of the spectacle.¹

To give examples, from the modern art of our upper classes, of art of the second kind, good universal art or even of the art of a whole people, is yet more difficult, especially in literary art and music. If there are some works which by their inner contents might be assigned to this class (such as "Don Quixote," Molière's comedies, "David Copperfield" and "The Pickwick Papers" by Dickens, Gogol's and Pushkin's tales, and some things of Maupassant's), these works are for the most part — from the exceptional nature of the feelings they

¹ In this picture the spectators in the Roman Amphitheater are turning down their thumbs to show that they wish the vanquished gladiator to be killed. — TR.

transmit, and the superfluity of special details of time and locality, and, above all, on account of the poverty of their subject-matter in comparison with examples of universal ancient art (such, for instance, as the story of Joseph)—comprehensible only to people of their own circle. That Joseph's brethren, being jealous of his father's affection, sell him to the merchants; that Potiphar's wife wishes to tempt the youth; that having attained the highest station, he takes pity on his brothers, including Benjamin, the favorite,—these and all the rest are feelings accessible alike to a Russian peasant, a Chinese, an African, a child, or an old man, educated or uneducated; and it is all written with such restraint, is so free from any superfluous detail, that the story may be told to any circle and will be equally comprehensible and touching to every one. But not such are the feelings of Don Quixote or of Molière's heroes (though Molière is perhaps the most universal, and therefore the most excellent, artist of modern times), nor of Pickwick and his friends. These feelings are not common to all men, but very exceptional; and therefore, to make them infectious, the authors have surrounded them with abundant details of time and place. And this abundance of detail makes the stories difficult of comprehension to all people not living within reach of the conditions described by the author.

The author of the novel of Joseph did not need to describe in detail, as would be done nowadays, the blood-stained coat of Joseph, the dwelling and dress of Jacob, the pose and attire of Potiphar's wife, and how, adjusting the bracelet on her left arm, she said, "Come to me," and so on, because the subject-matter of feelings in this novel is so strong that all details, except the most essential,—such as that Joseph went out into another room to weep,—are superfluous, and would only hinder the transmission of feelings. And therefore this novel is accessible to all men, touches people of all nations and classes, young and old, and has lasted to our times, and will yet last for thousands of years to come. But strip the best novels of our times of their details, and what will remain?

It is therefore impossible in modern literature to indicate works fully satisfying the demands of universality. Such works as exist are, to a great extent, spoilt by what is usually called "realism," but would be better termed "provincialism," in art.

In music the same occurs as in verbal art, and for similar reasons. In consequence of the poorness of the feeling they contain, the melodies of the modern composers are amazingly empty and insignificant. And to strengthen the impression produced by these empty melodies, the new musicians pile complex modulations on to each trivial melody, not only in their own national manner, but also in the way characteristic of their own exclusive circle and particular musical school. Melody — every melody — is free, and may be understood of all men; but as soon as it is bound up with a particular harmony, it ceases to be accessible except to people trained to such harmony, and it becomes strange, not only to common men of another nationality, but to all who do not belong to the circle whose members have accustomed themselves to certain forms of harmonization. So that music, like poetry, travels in a vicious circle. Trivial and exclusive melodies, in order to make them attractive, are laden with harmonic, rhythmic, and orchestral complications, and thus become yet more exclusive; and, far from being universal, are not even national, *i.e.* they are not comprehensible to the whole people but only to some people.

In music, besides marches and dances by various composers, which satisfy the demands of universal art, one can indicate very few works of this class: Bach's famous violin *aria*, Chopin's nocturne in E-flat major, and perhaps a dozen bits (not whole pieces, but parts) selected from the works of Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven, and Chopin.¹

¹ While offering as examples of art those that seem to me the best, I attach no special importance to my selection; for, besides being insufficiently informed in all branches of art, I belong to the class of people whose taste has, by false training, been perverted. And there-

Although in painting the same thing is repeated as in poetry and music, — namely, that in order to make them more interesting, works weak in conception are surrounded by minutely studied accessories of time and place, which give them a temporary and local interest but make them less universal, — still, in painting, more than in the other spheres of art, may be found works satisfying the demands of universal Christian art; that is to say, there are more works expressing feelings in which all men may participate.

In the arts of painting and sculpture, all pictures and statues in so-called genre style, depictions of animals, landscapes and caricatures with subjects comprehensible to every one, and also all kinds of ornaments, are universal in subject-matter. Such productions in painting and sculpture are very numerous (*e.g.* china dolls), but for the most part such objects (for instance, ornaments of all kinds) are either not considered to be art or are considered to be art of a low quality. In reality all such objects, if only they transmit a true feeling experienced by the artist and comprehensible to every one (however insignificant it may seem to us to be) are works of real good Christian art.

I fear it will here be urged against me that having denied that the conception of beauty can supply a standard for works of art, I contradict myself by acknowledging ornaments to be works of good art. The reproach is unjust, for the subject-matter of all kinds of ornamentation consists not in the beauty, but in the feeling (of admiration of, and delight in, the combination of lines and colors) which the artist has experienced and with which he infects the spectator. Art remains what

fore my old, inured habits may cause me to err, and I may mistake for absolute merit the impression a work produced on me in my youth. My only purpose in mentioning examples of works of this or that class is to make my meaning clearer, and to show how, with my present views, I understand excellence in art in relation to its subject-matter. I must, moreover, mention that I consign my own artistic productions to the category of bad art, excepting the story "God sees the Truth," which seeks a place in the first class, and "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," which belongs to the second.

it was and what it must be : nothing but the infection by one man of another, or of others, with the feelings experienced by the infector. Among those feelings is the feeling of delight at what pleases the sight. Objects pleasing the sight may be such as please a small or a large number of people, or such as please all men. And ornaments for the most part are of the latter kind. A landscape representing a very unusual view, or a genre picture of a special subject, may not please every one, but ornaments, from Yakutsk ornaments to Greek ones, are intelligible to every one and evoke a similar feeling of admiration in all, and therefore this despised kind of art should, in Christian society, be esteemed far above exceptional, pretentious pictures and sculptures.

So that there are only two kinds of good Christian art : all the rest of art not comprised in these two divisions should be acknowledged to be bad art, deserving not to be encouraged, but to be driven out, denied, and despised, as being art not uniting but dividing people. Such, in literary art, are all novels and poems which transmit Church or patriotic feelings, and also exclusive feelings pertaining only to the class of the idle rich ; such as aristocratic honor, satiety, spleen, pessimism, and refined and vicious feelings flowing from sex-love — quite incomprehensible to the great majority of mankind.

In painting we must similarly place in the class of bad art all the Church, patriotic, and exclusive pictures ; all the pictures representing the amusements and allurements of a rich and idle life ; all the so-called symbolic pictures, in which the very meaning of the symbol is comprehensible only to the people of a certain circle ; and, above all, pictures with voluptuous subjects — all that odious female nudity which fills all the exhibitions and galleries. And to this class belongs almost all the chamber and opera music of our times, — beginning especially from Beethoven (Schumann, Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner), by its subject-matter devoted to the expression of feelings accessible only to people who have developed in themselves an unhealthy, nervous irrita-

tion evoked by this exclusive, artificial, and complex music.

"What! the '*Ninth Symphony*' not a good work of art!" I hear exclaimed by indignant voices.

And I reply, Most certainly it is not. All that I have written I have written with the sole purpose of finding a clear and reasonable criterion by which to judge the merits of works of art. And this criterion, coinciding with the indications of plain and sane sense, indubitably shows me that that symphony by Beethoven is not a good work of art. Of course, to people educated in the adoration of certain productions and of their authors, to people whose taste has been perverted just by being educated in such adoration, the acknowledgment that such a celebrated work is bad is amazing and strange. But how are we to escape the indications of reason and of common sense?

Beethoven's "*Ninth Symphony*" is considered a great work of art. To verify its claim to be such, I must first ask myself whether this work transmits the highest religious feeling? I reply in the negative, for music in itself cannot transmit those feelings; and therefore I ask myself next, Since this work does not belong to the highest kind of religious art, has it the other characteristic of the good art of our time,—the quality of uniting all men in one common feeling: does it rank as Christian universal art? And again I have no option but to reply in the negative; for not only do I not see how the feelings transmitted by this work could unite people not specially trained to submit themselves to its complex hypnotism, but I am unable to imagine to myself a crowd of normal people who could understand anything of this long, confused, and artificial production, except short snatches which are lost in a sea of what is incomprehensible. And therefore, whether I like it or not, I am compelled to conclude that this work belongs to the rank of bad art. It is curious to note in this connection, that attached to the end of this very symphony is a poem of Schiller's which (though somewhat obscurely) expresses this very thought, namely, that feeling (Schil-

ler speaks only of the feeling of gladness) unites people and evokes love in them. But though this poem is sung at the end of the symphony, the music does not accord with the thought expressed in the verses; for the music is exclusive and does not unite all men, but unites only a few, dividing them off from the rest of mankind.

And just in this same way, in all branches of art, many and many works considered great by the upper classes of our society will have to be judged. By this one sure criterion we shall have to judge the celebrated "Divine Comedy" and "Jerusalem Delivered," and a great part of Shakespear's and Goethe's works, and in painting every representation of miracles, including Raphael's "Transfiguration," etc.

Whatever the work may be and however it may have been extolled, we have first to ask whether this work is one of real art or a counterfeit. Having acknowledged, on the basis of the indication of its infectiousness even to a small class of people, that a certain production belongs to the realm of art, it is necessary, on the basis of the indication of its accessibility, to decide the next question, Does this work belong to the category of bad, exclusive art, opposed to religious perception, or to Christian art, uniting people? And having acknowledged an article to belong to real Christian art, we must then, according to whether it transmits the feelings flowing from love to God and man, or merely the simple feelings uniting all men, assign it a place in the ranks of religious art or in those of universal art.

Only on the basis of such verification shall we find it possible to select from the whole mass of what, in our society, claims to be art, those works which form real, important, necessary spiritual food, and to separate them from all the harmful and useless art, and from the counterfeits of art which surround us. Only on the basis of such verification shall we be able to rid ourselves of the pernicious results of harmful art, and to avail ourselves of that beneficent action which is the purpose of true and good art, and which is indispensable for the spiritual life of man and of humanity.

CHAPTER XVII

ART is one of two organs of human progress. By words man interchanges thoughts, by the forms of art he interchanges feelings, and this with all men, not only of the present time, but also of the past and the future. It is natural to human beings to employ both these organs of intercommunication, and therefore the perversion of either of them must cause evil results to the society in which it occurs. And these results will be of two kinds: first, the absence, in that society, of the work which should be performed by the organ; and secondly, the harmful activity of the perverted organ. And just these results have shown themselves in our society. The organ of art has been perverted, and therefore the upper classes of society have, to a great extent, been deprived of the work that it should have performed. The diffusion in our society of enormous quantities of, on the one hand, those counterfeits of art which only serve to amuse and corrupt people, and, on the other hand, of works of insignificant, exclusive art, mistaken for the highest art, have perverted most men's capacity to be infected by true works of art, and have thus deprived them of the possibility of experiencing the highest feelings to which mankind has attained, and which can only be transmitted from man to man by art.

All the best that has been done in art by man remains strange to people who lack the capacity to be infected by art, and is replaced either by spurious counterfeits of art or by insignificant art, which they mistake for real art. People of our time and of our society are delighted with Baudelaires, Verlaines, Moréases, Ibsens, and Maeterlincks in poetry; with Monets, Manets, Puviss de Chavannes, Burne-Joneses, Stucks, and Böcklins in painting; with Wagners, Liszts, Richard Strausses, in music; and they are no longer capable of comprehending either the highest or the simplest art.

In the upper classes, in consequence of this loss of

capacity to be infected by works of art, people grow up, are educated, and live, lacking the fertilizing, improving influence of art, and therefore not only do not advance toward perfection, do not become kinder, but, on the contrary, possessing highly developed external means of civilization, they yet tend to become continually more savage, more coarse, and more cruel.

Such is the result of the absence from our society of the activity of that essential organ—art. But the consequences of the perverted activity of that organ are yet more harmful. And they are numerous.

The first consequence, plain for all to see, is the enormous expenditure of the labor of working people on things which are not only useless, but which, for the most part, are harmful; and more than that, the waste of priceless human lives on this unnecessary and harmful business. It is terrible to consider with what intensity, and amid what privations, millions of people—who lack time and opportunity to attend to what they and their families urgently require—labor for 10, 12, or 14 hours on end, and even at night, setting the type for pseudo-artistic books which spread vice among mankind, or working for theaters, concerts, exhibitions, and picture-galleries, which, for the most part, also serve vice; but it is yet more terrible to reflect that lively, kindly children, capable of all that is good, are devoted from their early years to such tasks as these: that for 6, 8, or 10 hours a day, and for 10 or 15 years, some of them should play scales and exercises; others should twist their limbs, walk on their toes, and lift their legs above their heads; a third set should sing solfeggios; a fourth set, showing themselves off in all manner of ways, should pronounce verses; a fifth set should draw from busts or from nude models and paint studies; a sixth set should write compositions according to the rules of certain periods; and that in these occupations, unworthy of a human being, which are often continued long after full maturity, they should waste their physical and mental strength and lose all perception of the meaning of life. It is often said that

it is horrible and pitiful to see little acrobats putting their legs over their necks, but it is not less pitiful to see children of 10 giving concerts, and it is still worse to see school-boys of 10 who, as a preparation for literary work, have learnt by heart the exceptions to the Latin grammar. These people not only grow physically and mentally deformed, but also morally deformed, and become incapable of doing anything really needed by man. Occupying in society the rôle of amusers of the rich, they lose their sense of human dignity, and develop in themselves such a passion for public applause that they are always a prey to an inflated and unsatisfied vanity which grows in them to diseased dimensions, and they expend their mental strength in efforts to obtain satisfaction for this passion. And what is most tragic of all is that these people, who for the sake of art are spoilt for life, not only do not render service to this art, but, on the contrary, inflict the greatest harm on it. They are taught in academies, schools, and conservatoires how to counterfeit art, and by learning this they so pervert themselves that they quite lose the capacity to produce works of real art, and become purveyors of that counterfeit, or trivial, or depraved art which floods our society. This is the first obvious consequence of the perversion of the organ of art.

The second consequence is that the productions of amusement-art, which are prepared in such terrific quantities by the armies of professional artists, enable the rich people of our times to live the lives they do, lives not only unnatural, but in contradiction to the humane principles these people themselves profess. To live as do the rich, idle people, especially the women, far from nature and from animals, in artificial conditions, with muscles atrophied or misdeveloped by gymnastics, and with enfeebled vital energy, would be impossible were it not for what is called art—for this occupation and amusement which hides from them the meaninglessness of their lives, and saves them from the dullness that oppresses them. Take from all these people the

theaters, concerts, exhibitions, piano-playing, songs, and novels with which they now fill their time, in full confidence that occupation with these things is a very refined, æsthetical, and therefore good occupation; take from the patrons of art who buy pictures, assist musicians, and are acquainted with writers, their rôle of protectors of that important matter art, and they will not be able to continue such a life, but will all be eaten up by ennui and spleen, and will become conscious of the meaninglessness and wrongness of their present mode of life. Only occupation with what, among them, is considered art renders it possible for them to continue to live on, infringing all natural conditions, without perceiving the emptiness and cruelty of their lives. And this support afforded to the false manner of life pursued by the rich is the second consequence, and a serious one, of the perversion of art.

The third consequence of the perversion of art is the perplexity produced in the minds of children and of plain folk. Among people not perverted by the false theories of our society, among workers and children, there exists a very definite conception of what people may be respected and praised for. In the minds of peasants and children the ground for praise or eulogy can only be either physical strength: Hercules, the heroes and conquerors; or moral, spiritual, strength: Sakya Muni giving up a beautiful wife and a kingdom to save mankind, Christ going to the cross for the truth he professed, and all the martyrs and the saints. Both are understood by peasants and children. They understand that physical strength must be respected, for it compels respect; and the moral strength of goodness an unperturbed man cannot fail to respect, because all his spiritual being draws him toward it. But these people, children, and peasants, suddenly perceive that besides those praised, respected, and rewarded for physical or moral strength, there are others who are praised, extolled, and rewarded much more than the heroes of strength and virtue, merely because they sing well, compose verses, or dance. They see that singers,

composers, painters, ballet-dancers, earn millions of roubles and receive more honor than the saints do: and peasants and children are perplexed.

When fifty years had elapsed after Pushkin's death, and, simultaneously, the cheap edition of his works began to circulate among the people and a monument was erected to him in Moscow, I received more than a dozen letters from different peasants asking why Pushkin was raised to such dignity. And only the other day a literate¹ man from Saratoff called on me who had evidently gone out of his mind over this very question. He was on his way to Moscow to expose the clergy for having taken part in raising a "monament" to Mr. Pushkin.

Indeed, one need only imagine to oneself what the state of mind of such a man of the people must be when he learns, from such rumors and newspapers as reach him, that the clergy, the Government officials, and all the best people in Russia are triumphantly unveiling a statue to a great man, the benefactor, the pride of Russia—Pushkin, of whom till then he had never heard. From all sides he reads or hears about this, and he naturally supposes that if such honors are rendered to any one, then without doubt he must have done something extraordinary—either some feat of strength or of goodness. He tries to learn who Pushkin was, and having discovered that Pushkin was neither a hero nor a general, but was a private person and a writer, he comes to the conclusion that Pushkin must have been a holy man and a teacher of goodness, and he hastens to read or to hear his life and works. But what must be his perplexity when he learns that Pushkin was a man of more than easy morals, who was killed in a duel, *i.e.* when attempting to murder another man, and that all his service consisted in writing verses about love, which were often very indecent.

That a hero, or Alexander the Great, or Genghis

¹ In Russian it is customary to make a distinction between literate and illiterate people, *i.e.* between those who can and those who cannot read. *Literate* in this sense does not imply that the man would speak or write correctly. — TR.

Khan, or Napoleon were great, he understands, because any one of them could have crushed him and a thousand like him; that Buddha, Socrates, and Christ were great he also understands, for he knows and feels that he and all men should be such as they were; but why a man should be great because he wrote verses about the love of women he cannot make out.

A similar perplexity must trouble the brain of a Breton or Norman peasant who hears that a monument, "*une statue*" (as to the Madonna), is being erected to Baudelaire, and reads, or is told, what the contents of his "Fleurs du Mal" are; or, more amazing still, to Verlaine, when he learns the story of that man's wretched, vicious life, and reads his verses. And what confusion it must cause in the brains of peasants when they learn that some Patti or Taglioni is paid £10,000 for a season, or that a painter gets as much for a picture, or that authors of novels describing love-scenes have received even more than that.

And it is the same with children. I remember how I passed through this stage of amazement and stupefaction, and only reconciled myself to this exaltation of artists to the level of heroes and saints by lowering in my own estimation the importance of moral excellence, and by attributing a false, unnatural meaning to works of art. And a similar confusion must occur in the soul of each child and each man of the people when he learns of the strange honors and rewards that are lavished on artists. This is the third consequence of the false relation in which our society stands toward art.

The fourth consequence is that people of the upper classes, more and more frequently encountering the contradictions between beauty and goodness, put the ideal of beauty first, thus freeing themselves from the demands of morality. These people, reversing the rôles, instead of admitting, as is really the case, that the art they serve is an antiquated affair, allege that morality is an antiquated affair, which can have no importance for people situated on that high plane of development on which they opine that they are situated.

This result of the false relation to art showed itself in our society long ago; but recently, with its prophet Nietzsche and his adherents, and with the decadents and certain English æsthetes who coincide with him, it is being expressed with especial impudence. The decadents, and æsthetes of the type at one time represented by Oscar Wilde, select as a theme for their productions the denial of morality and the laudation of vice.

This art has partly generated, and partly coincides with, a similar philosophic theory. I recently received from America a book entitled, "The Survival of the Fittest: Philosophy of Power," 1896, by Ragnar Redbeard, Chicago. The substance of this book, as it is expressed in the editor's preface, is that to measure "right" by the false philosophy of the Hebrew prophets and "weepful" Messiahs is madness. Right is not the offspring of doctrine, but of power. All laws, commandments, or doctrines as to not doing to another what you do not wish done to you, have no inherent authority whatever, but receive it only from the club, the gallows, and the sword. A man truly free is under no obligation to obey any injunction, human or divine. Obedience is the sign of the degenerate. Disobedience is the stamp of the hero. Men should not be bound by moral rules invented by their foes. The whole world is a slippery battlefield. Ideal justice demands that the vanquished should be exploited, emasculated, and scorned. The free and brave may seize the world. And, therefore, there should be eternal war for life, for land, for love, for women, for power, and for gold. (Something similar was said a few years ago by the celebrated and refined academician, Vogüé.) The earth and its treasures is "booty for the bold."

The author has evidently by himself, independently of Nietzsche, come to the same conclusions which are professed by the new artists.

Expressed in the form of a doctrine these positions startle us. In reality they are implied in the ideal of art serving beauty. The art of our upper classes has

educated people in this ideal of the over-man,¹ — which is, in reality, the old ideal of Nero, Stenka Razin,² Genghis Khan, Robert Macaire,³ or Napoleon, and all their accomplices, assistants, and adulators — and it supports this ideal with all its might.

It is this supplanting of the ideal of what is right by the ideal of what is beautiful, *i.e.* of what is pleasant, that is the fourth consequence, and a terrible one, of the perversion of art in our society. It is fearful to think of what would befall humanity were such art to spread among the masses of the people. And it already begins to spread.

Finally, the fifth and chief result is, that the art which flourishes in the upper classes of European society has a directly vitiating influence, infecting people with the worst feelings and with those most harmful to humanity, — superstition, patriotism, and, above all, sensuality.

Look carefully into the causes of the ignorance of the masses, and you may see that the chief cause does not at all lie in the lack of schools and libraries, as we are accustomed to suppose, but in those superstitions, both ecclesiastical and patriotic, with which the people are saturated, and which are unceasingly generated by all the methods of art. Church superstitions are supported

¹ The over-man (Uebermensch), in the Nietzschean philosophy, is that superior type of man whom the struggle for existence is to evolve, and who will seek only his own power and pleasure, will know nothing of pity, and will have the right, because he will possess the power, to make ordinary people serve him. — Tr.

² Stenka Razin was by origin a common Cossack. His brother was hung for a breach of military discipline, and to this event Stenka Razin's hatred of the governing classes has been attributed. He formed a robber band, and subsequently headed a formidable rebellion, declaring himself in favor of freedom for the serfs, religious toleration, and the abolition of taxes. Like the government he opposed, he relied on force, and, though he used it largely in defense of the poor against the rich, he still held to

“The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.”

Like Robin Hood, he is favorably treated in popular legends. — Tr.

³ Robert Macaire is a modern type of adroit and audacious rascality. He was the hero of a popular play produced in Paris in 1834. — Tr.

and produced by the poetry of prayers, hymns, painting, by the sculpture of images and of statues, by singing, by organs, by music, by architecture, and even by dramatic art in religious ceremonies. Patriotic superstitions are supported and produced by verses and stories, which are supplied even in schools, by music, by songs, by triumphal processions, by royal meetings, by martial pictures, and by monuments.

Were it not for this continual activity in all departments of art, perpetuating the ecclesiastical and patriotic intoxication and embitterment of the people, the masses would long ere this have attained to true enlightenment.

But it is not only in Church matters and patriotic matters that art depraves; it is art in our time that serves as the chief cause of the perversion of people in the most important question of social life, — in their sexual relations. We nearly all know by our own experience, and those who are fathers and mothers know in the case of their grown-up children also, what fearful mental and physical suffering, what useless waste of strength, people suffer merely as a consequence of dissoluteness in sexual desire.

Since the world began, since the Trojan war, which sprang from that same sexual dissoluteness, down to and including the suicides and murders of lovers described in almost every newspaper, a great proportion of the sufferings of the human race have come from this source.

And what is art doing? All art, real and counterfeit, with very few exceptions, is devoted to describing, depicting, and inflaming sexual love in every shape and form. When one remembers all those novels and their lust-kindling descriptions of love, from the most refined to the grossest, with which the literature of our society overflows; if one only remembers all those pictures and statues representing women's naked bodies, and all sorts of abominations which are reproduced in illustrations and advertisements; if one only remembers all the filthy operas and operettas, songs, and *romances* with which our world teems, involuntarily it seems as if existing art

had but one definite aim, — to disseminate vice as widely as possible.

Such, though not all, are the most direct consequences of that perversion of art which has occurred in our society. So that what in our society is called art not only does not conduce to the progress of mankind, but, more than almost anything else, hinders the attainment of goodness in our lives.

And therefore the question which involuntarily presents itself to every man free from artistic activity and therefore not bound to existing art by self-interest, the question asked by me at the beginning of this work: Is it just that to what we call art, to a something belonging to but a small section of society, should be offered up such sacrifices of human labor, of human lives, and of goodness as are now being offered up? receives the natural reply: No; it is unjust, and these things should not be! So also replies sound sense and unperverted moral feeling. Not only should these things not be, not only should no sacrifices be offered up to what among us is called art, but, on the contrary, the efforts of those who wish to live rightly should be directed toward the destruction of this art, for it is one of the most cruel of the evils that harass our section of humanity. So that, were the question put: Would it be preferable for our Christian world to be deprived of *all* that is now esteemed to be art, and, together with the false, to lose *all* that is good in it? I think that every reasonable and moral man would again decide the question as Plato decided it for his "Republic," and as all the Church Christian and Mohammedan teachers of mankind decided it, *i.e.* would say, "Rather let there be no art at all than continue the depraving art, or simulation of art, which now exists." Happily, no one has to face this question, and no one need adopt either solution. All that man can do, and that we — the so-called educated people, who are so placed that we have the possibility of understanding the meaning of the phenomena of our life — can and should do, is to understand the error we are involved in, and not harden our hearts in it, but seek for a way of escape.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE cause of the lie into which the art of our society has fallen was that people of the upper classes, having ceased to believe in the Church teaching (called Christian), did not resolve to accept true Christian teaching in its real and fundamental principles of sonship to God and brotherhood to man, but continued to live on without any belief, endeavoring to make up for the absence of belief — some by hypocrisy, pretending still to believe in the nonsense of the Church creeds; others by boldly asserting their disbelief; others by refined agnosticism; and others, again, by returning to the Greek worship of beauty, proclaiming egotism to be right, and elevating it to the rank of a religious doctrine.

The cause of the malady was the non-acceptance of Christ's teaching in its real, *i.e.* its full, meaning. And the only cure for the illness lies in acknowledging that teaching in its full meaning. And such acknowledgment in our time is not only possible, but inevitable. Already to-day a man, standing on the height of the knowledge of our age, whether he be nominally a Catholic or a Protestant, cannot say that he really believes in the dogmas of the Church: in God being a Trinity, in Christ being God, in the scheme of redemption, and so forth; nor can he satisfy himself by proclaiming his unbelief or skepticism, nor by relapsing into the worship of beauty and egotism. Above all, he can no longer say that we do not know the real meaning of Christ's teaching. That meaning has not only become accessible to all men of our times, but the whole life of man to-day is permeated by the spirit of that teaching, and, consciously or unconsciously, is guided by it.

However differently in form people belonging to our Christian world may define the destiny of man; whether they see it in human progress in whatever sense of the words, in the union of all men in a socialistic realm, or in the establishment of a commune; whether they look forward to the union of mankind under the guidance of

one universal Church, or to the federation of the world, — however various in form their definitions of the destination of human life may be, all men in our times already admit that the highest well-being attainable by men is to be reached by their union with one another.

However people of our upper classes (feeling that their ascendancy can only be maintained as long as they separate themselves — the rich and learned — from the laborers, the poor, and the unlearned) may seek to devise new conceptions of life by which their privileges may be perpetuated, — now the ideal of returning to antiquity, now mysticism, now Hellenism, now the cult of the superior person (over-man-ism), — they have, willingly or unwillingly, to admit the truth which is elucidating itself from all sides, voluntarily and involuntarily, namely, that our welfare lies only in the unification and the brotherhood of man.

Unconsciously this truth is confirmed by the construction of means of communication, — telegraphs, telephones, the press, and the ever increasing attainability of material well-being for every one, — and consciously it is affirmed by the destruction of superstitions which divide men, by the diffusion of the truths of knowledge, and by the expression of the ideal of the brotherhood of man in the best works of art of our time.

Art is a spiritual organ of human life which cannot be destroyed, and therefore, notwithstanding all the efforts made by people of the upper classes to conceal the religious ideal by which humanity lives, that ideal is more and more clearly recognized by man, and even in our perverted society is more and more often partially expressed by science and by art. During the present century works of the higher kind of religious art have appeared more and more frequently, both in literature and in painting, permeated by a truly Christian spirit, as also works of the universal art of common life, accessible to all. So that even art knows the true ideal of our times, and tends toward it. On the one hand, the best works of art of our times transmit religious feelings urging toward the union and the brotherhood of man (such

are the works of Dickens, Hugo, Dostoievsky; and in painting, of Millet, Bastien Lepage, Jules Breton, L'Hermitte, and others); on the other hand, they strive toward the transmission, not of feelings which are natural to people of the upper classes only, but of such feelings as may unite every one without exception. There are as yet few such works, but the need of them is already acknowledged. In recent times we also meet more and more frequently with attempts at publications, pictures, concerts, and theaters for the people. All this is still very far from accomplishing what should be done, but already the direction in which good art instinctively presses forward to regain the path natural to it can be discerned.

The religious perception of our time — which consists in acknowledging that the aim of life (both collective and individual) is the union of mankind — is already so sufficiently distinct that people have now only to reject the false theory of beauty, according to which enjoyment is considered to be the purpose of art, and religious perception will naturally take its place as the guide of the art of our time.

And as soon as the religious perception, which already unconsciously directs the life of man, is consciously acknowledged, then immediately and naturally the division of art, into art for the lower and art for the upper classes, will disappear. There will be one common, brotherly, universal art; and first, that art will naturally be rejected which transmits feelings incompatible with the religious perception of our time, — feelings which do not unite, but divide men, — and then that insignificant, exclusive art will be rejected to which an importance is now attached to which it has no right.

And as soon as this occurs, art will immediately cease to be what it has been in recent times, — a means of making people coarser and more vicious; and it will become, what it always used to be and should be, a means by which humanity progresses toward unity and blessedness.

Strange as the comparison may sound, what has hap-

pened to the art of our circle and time is what happens to a woman who sells her womanly attractiveness, intended for maternity, for the pleasure of those who desire such pleasures.

The art of our time and of our circle has become a prostitute. And this comparison holds good even in minute details. Like her it is not limited to certain times, like her it is always adorned, like her it is always salable, and like her it is enticing and ruinous.

A real work of art can only arise in the soul of an artist occasionally as the fruit of the life he has lived, just as a child is conceived by its mother. But counterfeit art is produced by artisans and handicraftsmen continually, if only consumers can be found.

Real art, like the wife of an affectionate husband, needs no ornaments. But counterfeit art, like a prostitute, must always be decked out.

The cause of the production of real art is the artist's inner need to express a feeling that has accumulated, just as for a mother the cause of sexual conception is love. The cause of counterfeit art, as of prostitution, is gain.

The consequence of true art is the introduction of a new feeling into the intercourse of life, as the consequence of a wife's love is the birth of a new man into life.

The consequences of counterfeit art are the perversion of man, pleasure which never satisfies, and the weakening of man's spiritual strength.

And this is what people of our day and of our circle should understand, in order to avoid the filthy torrent of depraved and prostituted art with which we are deluged.

CHAPTER XIX

PEOPLE talk of the art of the future, meaning by "art of the future" some especially refined, new art, which, as they imagine, will be developed out of that exclusive art of one class which is now considered the highest art. But no such new art of the future can or will be found. Our exclusive art, that of the upper classes of Christen-

dom, has found its way into a blind alley. The direction in which it has been going leads nowhere. Having once let go of that which is most essential for art (namely, the guidance given by religious perception), that art has become ever more and more exclusive, and therefore ever more and more perverted, until, finally, it has come to nothing. The art of the future, that which is really coming, will not be a development of present-day art, but will arise on completely other and new foundations, having nothing in common with those by which our present art of the upper classes is guided.

Art of the future, that is to say, such part of art as will be chosen from among all the art diffused among mankind, will consist, not in transmitting feelings accessible only to members of the rich classes, as is the case to-day, but in transmitting such feelings as embody the highest religious perception of our times. Only those productions will be considered art which transmit feelings drawing men together in brotherly union, or such universal feelings as can unite all men. Only such art will be chosen, tolerated, approved, and diffused. But art transmitting feelings flowing from antiquated, worn-out religious teaching, — Church art, patriotic art, voluptuous art, transmitting feelings of superstitious fear, of pride, of vanity, of ecstatic admiration of national heroes, — art exciting exclusive love of one's own people, or sensuality, will be considered bad, harmful art, and will be censured and despised by public opinion. All the rest of art, transmitting feelings accessible only to a section of people, will be considered unimportant, and will be neither blamed nor praised. And the appraisal of art in general will devolve, not, as is now the case, on a separate class of rich people, but on the whole people; so that for a work to be esteemed good, and to be approved of and diffused, it will have to satisfy the demands, not of a few people living in identical and often unnatural conditions, but it will have to satisfy the demands of all those great masses of people who are situated in the natural conditions of laborious life.

And the artists producing art will also not be, as now,

merely a few people selected from a small section of the nation, members of the upper classes or their hangers-on, but will consist of all those gifted members of the whole people who prove capable of, and are inclined toward, artistic activity.

Artistic activity will then be accessible to all men. It will become accessible to the whole people, because, in the first place, in the art of the future, not only will that complex technique, which deforms the productions of the art of to-day and requires so great an effort and expenditure of time, not be demanded, but, on the contrary, the demand will be for clearness, simplicity, and brevity — conditions mastered, not by mechanical exercises, but by the education of taste. And secondly, artistic activity will become accessible to all men of the people because, instead of the present professional schools which only some can enter, all will learn music and depictive art (singing and drawing) equally with letters in the elementary schools, and in such a way that every man, having received the first principles of drawing and music, and feeling a capacity for, and a call to, one or other of the arts, will be able to perfect himself in it.

People think that if there are no special art schools the technique of art will deteriorate. Undoubtedly, if by technique we understand those complications of art which are now considered an excellence, it will deteriorate; but if by technique is understood clearness, beauty, simplicity, and compression in works of art, then, even if the elements of drawing and music were not to be taught in the national schools, the technique will not only not deteriorate, but, as is shown by all peasant art, will be a hundred times better. It will be improved, because all the artists of genius now hidden among the masses will become producers of art and will give models of excellence, which (as has always been the case) will be the best schools of technique for their successors. For every true artist, even now, learns his technique, chiefly, not in the schools, but in life, from the examples of the great masters; then — when the producers of art will be the best artists of the whole nation, and there

will be more such examples, and they will be more accessible — such part of the school training as the future artist will lose will be a hundredfold compensated for by the training he will receive from the numerous examples of good art diffused in society.

Such will be one difference between present and future art. Another difference will be that art will not be produced by professional artists receiving payment for their work and engaged on nothing else besides their art. The art of the future will be produced by all the members of the community who feel the need of such activity, but they will occupy themselves with art only when they feel such need.

In our society people think that an artist will work better, and produce more, if he has a secured maintenance. And this opinion would serve once more to show clearly, were such demonstration still needed, that what among us is considered art is not art, but only its counterfeit. It is quite true that for the production of boots or loaves division of labor is very advantageous, and that the bootmaker or baker who need not prepare his own dinner or fetch his own fuel will make more boots or loaves than if he had to busy himself about these matters. But art is not a handicraft; it is the transmission of feeling the artist has experienced. And sound feeling can only be engendered in a man when he is living on all its sides the life natural and proper to mankind. And therefore security of maintenance is a condition most harmful to an artist's true productiveness, since it removes him from the condition natural to all men, — that of struggle with nature for the maintenance of both his own life and that of others, — and thus deprives him of opportunity and possibility to experience the most important and natural feelings of man. There is no position more injurious to an artist's productiveness than that position of complete security and luxury in which artists usually live in our society.

The artist of the future will live the common life of man, earning his subsistence by some kind of labor. The fruits of that highest spiritual strength which passes

through him he will try to share with the greatest possible number of people, for in such transmission to others of the feelings that have arisen in him he will find his happiness and his reward. The artist of the future will be unable to understand how an artist, whose chief delight is in the wide diffusion of his works, could give them only in exchange for a certain payment.

Until the dealers are driven out, the temple of art will not be a temple. But the art of the future will drive them out.

And therefore the subject-matter of the art of the future, as I imagine it to myself, will be totally unlike that of to-day. It will consist, not in the expression of exclusive feelings: pride, spleen, satiety, and all possible forms of voluptuousness, available and interesting only to people who, by force, have freed themselves from the labor natural to human beings; but it will consist in the expression of feelings experienced by a man living the life natural to all men and flowing from the religious perception of our times, or of such feelings as are open to all men without exception.

To people of our circle who do not know and cannot or will not understand the feelings which will form the subject-matter of the art of the future, such subject-matter appears very poor in comparison with those subtleties of exclusive art with which they are now occupied. "What is there fresh to be said in the sphere of the Christian feeling of love of one's fellow-man? The feelings common to every one are so insignificant and monotonous," think they. And yet, in our time, the really fresh feelings can only be religious, Christian feelings, and such as are open, accessible, to all. The feelings flowing from the religious perception of our times, Christian feelings, are infinitely new and varied, only not in the sense some people imagine, — not that they can be evoked by the depiction of Christ and of gospel episodes, or by repeating in new forms the Christian truths of unity, brotherhood, equality, and love, — but in that all the oldest, commonest, and most hackneyed phenomena of life evoke the newest, most unexpected, and touching

emotions as soon as a man regards them from the Christian point of view.

What can be older than the relations between married couples, of parents to children, of children to parents; the relations of men to their fellow-countrymen and to foreigners, to an invasion, to defense, to property, to the land, or to animals? But as soon as a man regards these matters from the Christian point of view, endlessly varied, fresh, complex, and strong emotions immediately arise.

And, in the same way, that realm of subject-matter for the art of the future which relates to the simplest feelings of common life open to all will not be narrowed, but widened. In our former art only the expression of feelings natural to people of a certain exceptional position was considered worthy of being transmitted by art, and even then only on condition that these feelings were transmitted in a most refined manner, incomprehensible to the majority of men; all the immense realm of folk-art, and children's art — jests, proverbs, riddles, songs, dances, children's games, and mimicry — was not esteemed a domain worthy of art.

The artist of the future will understand that to compose a fairy-tale, a little song which will touch, a lullaby or a riddle which will entertain, a jest which will amuse, or to draw a sketch which will delight dozens of generations or millions of children and adults, is incomparably more important and more fruitful than to compose a novel or a symphony, or paint a picture which will divert some members of the wealthy classes for a short time, and then be forever forgotten. The region of this art of the simple feelings accessible to all is enormous, and it is as yet almost untouched.

The art of the future, therefore, will not be poorer, but infinitely richer in subject-matter. And the form of the art of the future will also not be inferior to the present forms of art, but infinitely superior to them. Superior, not in the sense of having a refined and complex technique, but in the sense of the capacity briefly, simply, and clearly to transmit, without any

superfluities, the feeling which the artist has experienced and wishes to transmit.

I remember once speaking to a famous astronomer who had given public lectures on the spectrum analysis of the stars of the Milky Way, and saying it would be a good thing if, with his knowledge and masterly delivery, he would give a lecture merely on the formation and movements of the earth, for certainly there were many people at his lecture on the spectrum analysis of the stars of the Milky Way, especially among the women, who did not well know why night follows day and summer follows winter. The wise astronomer smiled as he answered, "Yes, it would be a good thing, but it would be very difficult. To lecture on the spectrum analysis of the Milky Way is far easier."

And so it is in art. To write a rhymed poem dealing with the times of Cleopatra, or paint a picture of Nero burning Rome, or compose a symphony in the manner of Brahms or Richard Strauss, or an opera like Wagner's, is far easier than to tell a simple story without any unnecessary details, yet so that it should transmit the feelings of the narrator, or to draw a pencil-sketch which should touch or amuse the beholder, or to compose four bars of clear and simple melody, without any accompaniment, which should convey an impression and be remembered by those who hear it.

"It is impossible for us, with our culture, to return to a primitive state," say the artists of our time. "It is impossible for us now to write such stories as that of Joseph or the 'Odyssey,' to produce such statues as the Venus of Milo, or to compose such music as the folk-songs."

And indeed, for the artists of our society and day, it is impossible, but not for the future artist, who will be free from all the perversion of technical improvements hiding the absence of subject-matter, and who, not being a professional artist and receiving no payment for his activity, will only produce art when he feels impelled to do so by an irresistible inner impulse.

The art of the future will thus be completely distinct, both in subject-matter and in form, from what is now called art. The only subject-matter of the art of the future will be either feelings drawing men toward union, or such as already unite them; and the forms of art will be such as will be open to every one. And therefore, the ideal of excellence in the future will not be the exclusiveness of feeling, accessible only to some, but, on the contrary, its universality. And not bulkiness, obscurity, and complexity of form, as is now esteemed, but, on the contrary, brevity, clearness, and simplicity of expression. Only when art has attained to that, will art neither divert nor deprave men as it does now, calling on them to expend their best strength on it, but be what it should be, — a vehicle wherewith to transmit religious, Christian perception from the realm of reason and intellect into that of feeling, and really drawing people in actual life nearer to that perfection and unity indicated to them by their religious perception.

CHAPTER XX

THE CONCLUSION

I HAVE accomplished, to the best of my ability, this work which has occupied me for fifteen years, on a subject near to me — that of art. By saying that this subject has occupied me for fifteen years, I do not mean that I have been writing this book fifteen years, but only that I began to write on art fifteen years ago, thinking that when once I undertook the task I should be able to accomplish it without a break. It proved, however, that my views on the matter then were so far from clear that I could not arrange them in a way that satisfied me. From that time I have never ceased to think on the subject, and I have recommenced to write on it six or seven times; but each time, after writing a considerable part of it, I have found myself unable to bring the

work to a satisfactory conclusion, and have had to put it aside. Now I have finished it; and however badly I may have performed the task, my hope is that my fundamental thought as to the false direction the art of our society has taken and is following, as to the reasons of this, and as to the real destination of art, is correct, and that therefore my work will not be without avail. But that this should come to pass, and that art should really abandon its false path and take the new direction, it is necessary that another equally important human spiritual activity, — science, — in intimate dependence on which art always rests, should abandon the false path which it too, like art, is following.

Science and art are as closely bound together as the lungs and the heart, so that if one organ is vitiated the other cannot act rightly.

True science investigates and brings to human perception such truths and such knowledge as the people of a given time and society consider most important. Art transmits these truths from the region of perception to the region of emotion. Therefore, if the path chosen by science be false, so also will be the path taken by art. Science and art are like a certain kind of barge with kedge-anchors which used to ply on our rivers. Science, like the boats which took the anchors up-stream and made them secure, gives direction to the forward movement; while art, like the windlass worked on the barge to draw it toward the anchor, causes the actual progression. And thus a false activity of science inevitably causes a correspondingly false activity of art.

As art in general is the transmission of every kind of feeling, but in the limited sense of the word we only call that art which transmits feelings acknowledged by us to be important, so also science in general is the transmission of all possible knowledge; but in the limited sense of the word we call science that which transmits knowledge acknowledged by us to be important.

And the degree of importance, both of the feelings transmitted by art and of the information transmitted by science, is decided by the religious perception of the given

time and society, *i.e.* by the common understanding of the purpose of their lives possessed by the people of that time or society.

That which most of all contributes to the fulfilment of that purpose will be studied most; that which contributes less will be studied less; that which does not contribute at all to the fulfilment of the purpose of human life will be entirely neglected, or, if studied, such study will not be accounted science. So it always has been, and so it should be now; for such is the nature of human knowledge and of human life. But the science of the upper classes of our time, which not only does not acknowledge any religion, but considers every religion to be mere superstition, could not and cannot make such distinctions.

Scientists of our day affirm that they study *everything* impartially; but as everything is too much (is in fact an infinite number of objects), and as it is impossible to study all alike, this is only said in the theory, while in practice not everything is studied, and study is applied far from impartially, only that being studied which, on the one hand, is most wanted by, and on the other hand, is pleasantest to, those people who occupy themselves with science. And what the people, belonging to the upper classes, who are occupying themselves with science most want is the maintenance of the system under which those classes retain their privileges; and what is pleasantest are such things as satisfy idle curiosity, do not demand great mental efforts, and can be practically applied.

And therefore one side of science, including theology and philosophy adapted to the existing order, as also history and political economy of the same sort, are chiefly occupied in proving that the existing order is the very one which ought to exist; that it has come into existence and continues to exist by the operation of immutable laws not amenable to human will, and that all efforts to change it are therefore harmful and wrong. The other part, experimental science, — including mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, physics, botany, and all the natural sciences, — is exclusively occupied with

things that have no direct relation to human life : with what is curious, and with things of which practical application advantageous to people of the upper classes can be made. And to justify that selection of objects of study which (in conformity to their own position) the men of science of our times have made, they have devised a theory of science for science's sake, quite similar to the theory of art for art's sake.

As by the theory of art for art's sake it appears that occupation with all those things that please us — is art, so, by the theory of science for science's sake, the study of that which interests us — is science.

So that one side of science, instead of studying how people should live in order to fulfil their mission in life, demonstrates the righteousness and immutability of the bad and false arrangements of life which exist around us ; while the other part, experimental science, occupies itself with questions of simple curiosity or with technical improvements.

The first of these divisions of science is harmful, not only because it confuses people's perceptions and gives false decisions, but also because it exists, and occupies the ground which should belong to true science. It does this harm, that each man, in order to approach the study of the most important questions of life, must first refute these erections of lies which have during ages been piled around each of the most essential questions of human life, and which are propped up by all the strength of human ingenuity.

The second division — the one of which modern science is so particularly proud, and which is considered by many people to be the only real science — is harmful in that it diverts attention from the really important subjects to insignificant subjects, and is also directly harmful in that, under the evil system of society which the first division of science justifies and supports, a great part of the technical gains of science are turned, not to the advantage, but to the injury of mankind.

Indeed, it is only to those who are devoting their lives to such study that it seems as if all the inventions which

are made in the sphere of natural science were very important and useful things. And to these people it seems so only when they do not look around them and do not see what is really important. They only need tear themselves away from the psychological microscope under which they examine the objects of their study, and look about them, in order to see how insignificant is all that has afforded them such naïve pride, all that knowledge not only of geometry of n -dimensions, spectrum analysis of the Milky Way, the form of atoms, dimensions of human skulls of the Stone Age, and similar trifles, but even our knowledge of micro-organisms, X-rays, etc., in comparison with such knowledge as we have thrown aside and handed over to the perversions of the professors of theology, jurisprudence, political economy, financial science, etc. We need only look around us to perceive that the activity proper to real science is not the study of whatever happens to interest us, but the study of how man's life should be established, — the study of those questions of religion, morality, and social life, without the solution of which all our knowledge of nature will be harmful or insignificant.

We are highly delighted and very proud that our science renders it possible to utilize the energy of a waterfall and make it work in factories, or that we have pierced tunnels through mountains, and so forth. But the pity of it is that we make the force of the waterfall labor, not for the benefit of the workmen, but to enrich capitalists who produce articles of luxury or weapons of man-destroying war. The same dynamite with which we blast the mountains to pierce tunnels we use for wars, from which latter we not only do not intend to abstain, but which we consider inevitable, and for which we unceasingly prepare.

If we are now able to inoculate preventatively with diphtheritic microbes, to find a needle in a body by means of X-rays, to straighten a hunched-back, cure syphilis, and perform wonderful operations, we should not be proud of these acquisitions either (even were they all established beyond dispute) if we fully under-

stood the true purpose of real science. If but one-tenth of the efforts now spent on objects of pure curiosity or of merely practical application were expended on real science organizing the life of man, more than half the people now sick would not have the illnesses from which a small minority of them now get cured in hospitals. There would be no poor-blooded and deformed children growing up in factories, no death-rates, as now, of fifty per cent among children, no deterioration of whole generations, no prostitution, no syphilis, and no murdering of hundreds of thousands in wars, nor those horrors of folly and of misery which our present science considers a necessary condition of human life.

We have so perverted the conception of science that it seems strange to men of our day to allude to sciences which should prevent the mortality of children, prostitution, syphilis, the deterioration of whole generations, and the wholesale murder of men. It seems to us that science is only then real science when a man in a laboratory pours liquids from one jar into another, or analyzes the spectrum, or cuts up frogs and porpoises, or weaves in a specialized, scientific jargon an obscure network of conventional phrases — theological, philosophical, historical, juridical, or politico-economical — semi-intelligible to the man himself, and intended to demonstrate that what now is, is what should be.

But science, true science, — such science as would really deserve the respect which is now claimed by the followers of one (the least important) part of science, — is not at all such as this: real science lies in knowing what we should and what we should not believe, in knowing how the associated life of man should and should not be constituted; how to treat sexual relations, how to educate children, how to use the land, how to cultivate it oneself without oppressing other people, how to treat foreigners, how to treat animals, and much more that is important for the life of man.

Such has true science ever been and such it should be. And such science is springing up in our times; but, on the one hand, such true science is denied and refuted by

all those scientific people who defend the existing order of society, and, on the other hand, it is considered empty, unnecessary, unscientific science by those who are engrossed in experimental science.

For instance, books and sermons appear, demonstrating the antiquatedness and absurdity of Church dogmas, as well as the necessity of establishing a reasonable religious perception suitable to our times, and all the theology that is considered to be real science is only engaged in refuting these works and in exercising human intelligence again and again to find support and justification for superstitions long since outlived, and which have now become quite meaningless. Or a sermon appears showing that land should not be an object of private possession, and that the institution of private property in land is a chief cause of the poverty of the masses. Apparently science, real science, should welcome such a sermon and draw further deductions from this position. But the science of our times does nothing of the kind: on the contrary, political economy demonstrates the opposite position; namely, that landed property, like every other form of property, must be more and more concentrated in the hands of a small number of owners. Again, in the same way, one would suppose it to be the business of real science to demonstrate the irrationality, unprofitableness, and immorality of war and of executions; or the inhumanity and harmfulness of prostitution; or the absurdity, harmfulness, and immorality of using narcotics or of eating animals; or the irrationality, harmfulness, and antiquatedness of patriotism. And such works exist, but are all considered unscientific; while works to prove that all these things ought to continue, and works intended to satisfy an idle thirst for knowledge lacking any relation to human life, are considered to be scientific.

The deviation of the science of our time from its true purpose is strikingly illustrated by those ideals which are put forward by some scientists, and are not denied, but admitted, by the majority of scientific men.

These ideals are expressed not only in stupid, fashion-

able books, describing the world as it will be in 1000 or 3000 years' time, but also by sociologists who consider themselves serious men of science. These ideals are that food, instead of being obtained from the land by agriculture, will be prepared in laboratories by chemical means, and that human labor will be almost entirely superseded by the utilization of natural forces.

Man will not, as now, eat an egg laid by a hen he has kept, or bread grown on his field, or an apple from a tree he has reared and which has blossomed and matured in his sight; but he will eat tasty, nutritious, food which will be prepared in laboratories by the conjoint labor of many people in which he will take a small part. Man will hardly need to labor, so that all men will be able to yield to idleness as the upper, ruling classes now yield to it.

Nothing shows more plainly than these ideals to what a degree the science of our times has deviated from the true path.

The great majority of men in our times lack good and sufficient food (as well as dwellings and clothes and all the first necessities of life). And this great majority of men is compelled, to the injury of its well-being, to labor continually beyond its strength. Both these evils can easily be removed by abolishing mutual strife, luxury, and the unrighteous distribution of wealth, in a word, by the abolition of a false and harmful order and the establishment of a reasonable, human manner of life. But science considers the existing order of things to be as immutable as the movements of the planets, and therefore assumes that the purpose of science is — not to elucidate the falseness of this order and to arrange a new, reasonable way of life — but, under the existing order of things, to feed everybody and enable all to be as idle as the ruling classes, who live a depraved life, now are.

And, meanwhile, it is forgotten that nourishment with corn, vegetables, and fruit raised from the soil by one's own labor is the pleasantest, healthiest, easiest, and most natural nourishment, and that the work of using one's

muscles is as necessary a condition of life as is the oxidation of the blood by breathing.

To invent means whereby people might, while continuing our false division of property and labor, be well nourished by means of chemically prepared food, and might make the forces of nature work for them, is like inventing means to pump oxygen into the lungs of a man kept in a closed chamber, the air of which is bad, when all that is needed is to cease to confine the man in the closed chamber.

In the vegetable and animal kingdoms a laboratory for the production of food has been arranged, such as can be surpassed by no professors, and to enjoy the fruits of this laboratory, and to participate in it, man has only to yield to that ever joyful impulse to labor, without which man's life is a torment. And lo and behold! the scientists of our times, instead of employing all their strength to abolish whatever hinders man from utilizing the good things prepared for him, acknowledge the conditions under which man is deprived of these blessings to be unalterable, and instead of arranging the life of man so that he might work joyfully and be fed from the soil, they devise methods which will cause him to become an artificial abortion. It is like not helping a man out of confinement into the fresh air, but devising means, instead, to pump into him the necessary quantity of oxygen and arranging so that he may live in a stifling cellar instead of living at home.

Such false ideals could not exist if science were not on a false path.

And yet the feelings transmitted by art grow up on the bases supplied by science.

But what feelings can such misdirected science evoke? One side of this science evokes antiquated feelings, which humanity has used up, and which, in our times, are bad and exclusive. The other side, occupied with the study of subjects unrelated to the conduct of human life, by its very nature cannot serve as a basis for art.

So that art in our times, to be art, must either open up its own road independently of science, or must take

direction from the unrecognized science which is denounced by the orthodox section of science. And this is what art, when it even partially fulfils its mission, is doing.

It is to be hoped that the work I have tried to perform concerning art will be performed also for science—that the falseness of the theory of science for science's sake will be demonstrated; that the necessity of acknowledging Christian teaching in its true meaning will be clearly shown, that on the basis of that teaching a reappraisal will be made of the knowledge we possess, and of which we are so proud; that the secondariness and insignificance of experimental science, and the primacy and importance of religious, moral, and social knowledge will be established; and that such knowledge will not, as now, be left to the guidance of the upper classes only, but will form a chief interest of all free, truth-loving men, such as those who, not in agreement with the upper classes, but in their despite, have always forwarded the real science of life.

Astronomical, physical, chemical, and biological science, as also technical and medical science, will be studied only in so far as they can help to free mankind from religious, juridical, or social deceptions, or can serve to promote the well-being of all men, and not of any single class.

Only then will science cease to be what it is now,—on the one hand a system of sophistries, needed for the maintenance of the existing worn-out order of society, and, on the other hand, a shapeless mass of miscellaneous knowledge, for the most part good for little or nothing,—and become a shapely and organic whole, having a definite and reasonable purpose comprehensible to all men; namely, the purpose of bringing to the consciousness of men the truths that flow from the religious perception of our times.

And only then will art, which is always dependent on science, be what it might and should be, an organ co-equally important with science for the life and progress of mankind.

Art is not a pleasure, a solace, or an amusement; art is a great matter. Art is an organ of human life, transmitting man's reasonable perception into feeling. In our age the common religious perception of men is the consciousness of the brotherhood of man—we know that the well-being of man lies in union with his fellow-men. True science should indicate the various methods of applying this consciousness to life. Art should transform this perception into feeling.

The task of art is enormous. Through the influence of real art, aided by science guided by religion, that peaceful coöperation of man which is now obtained by external means—by our law-courts, police, charitable institutions, factory inspection, etc.—should be obtained by man's free and joyous activity. Art should cause violence to be set aside.

And it is only art that can accomplish this.

All that now, independently of the fear of violence and punishment, makes the social life of man possible (and already now this is an enormous part of the order of our lives)—all this has been brought about by art. If by art it has been inculcated how people should treat religious objects, their parents, their children, their wives, their relations, strangers, foreigners; how to conduct themselves to their elders, their superiors, to those who suffer, to their enemies, and to animals; and if this has been obeyed through generations by millions of people, not only unenforced by any violence, but so that the force of such customs can be shaken in no way but by means of art—then, by the same art, other customs, more in accord with the religious perception of our time, may be evoked. If art has been able to convey the sentiment of reverence for images, for the eucharist, and for the king's person; of shame at betraying a comrade, devotion to a flag, the necessity of revenge for an insult, the need to sacrifice one's labor for the erection and adornment of churches, the duty of defending one's honor or the glory of one's native land—then that same art can also evoke reverence for the dignity of every man and for the life of every animal; can make

men ashamed of luxury, of violence, of revenge, or of using for their pleasure that of which others are in need; can compel people freely, gladly, and without noticing it, to sacrifice themselves in the service of man.

The task for art to accomplish is to make that feeling of brotherhood and love of one's neighbor, now attained only by the best members of society, the customary feeling and the instinct of all men. By evoking, under imaginary conditions, the feeling of brotherhood and love, religious art will train men to experience those same feelings under similar circumstances in actual life; it will lay in the souls of men the rails along which the actions of those whom art thus educates will naturally pass. And universal art, by uniting the most different people in one common feeling, by destroying separation, will educate people to union, will show them, not by reason, but by life itself, the joy of universal union reaching beyond the bounds set by life.

The destiny of art in our time is to transmit from the realm of reason to the realm of feeling the truth that well-being for men consists in being united together, and to set up, in place of the existing reign of force, that kingdom of God, *i.e.* of love, which we all recognize to be the highest aim of human life.

Possibly, in the future, science may reveal to art yet newer and higher ideals, which art may realize; but, in our time, the destiny of art is clear and definite. The task for Christian art is to establish brotherly union among men.

APPENDIX I

This is the first page of Mallarmé's book, "Divagations":—

LE PHÉNOMÈNE FUTUR

Un ciel pâle, sur le monde qui finit de décrépitude, va peut-être partir avec les nuages: les lambeaux de la pourpre usée des couchants déteignent dans une rivière dormant à l'horizon

submergé de rayons et d'eau. Les arbres s'ennuient, et, sous leur feuillage blanchi (de la poussière du temps plutôt que celle des chemins) monte la maison en toile de Montreur de choses Passées : maint réverbère attend le crépuscule et ravive les visages d'une malheureuse foule, vaincue par la maladie immortelle et le péché des siècles, d'hommes près de leurs chétives complices enceintes des fruits misérables avec lesquels périra la terre. Dans le silence inquiet de tous les yeux suppliant là-bas le soleil qui, sous l'eau, s'enfonce avec le désespoir d'un cri, voici le simple boniment : "Nulle enseigne ne vous régale du spectacle intérieur, car il n'est pas maintenant un peintre capable d'en donner une ombre triste. J'apporte, vivante (et préservée à travers les ans par la science souveraine) une Femme d'autrefois. Quelque folie, originelle et naïve, une extase d'or, je ne sais quoi ! par elle nommé sa chevelure, se ploie avec la grâce des étoffes autour d'un visage qu' éclaire la nudité sanglante de ses lèvres. A la place du vêtement vain, elle a un corps ; et les yeux, semblables aux pierres rares ! ne valent pas ce regard qui sort de sa chair heureuse : des seins levés comme s'ils étaient pleins d'un lait éternel, la pointe vers le ciel, les jambes lisses qui gardent le sel de la mer première." Se rappelant leurs pauvres épouses, chauves, morbides et pleines d'horreur, les maris se pressent : elles aussi par curiosité, mélancoliques, veulent voir.

Quand tous auront contemplé la noble créature, vestige de quelque époque déjà maudite, les uns indifférents, car ils n'auront pas eu la force de comprendre, mais d'autres navrés et la paupière humide de larmes résignées, se regarderont ; tandis que les poètes de ces temps, sentant se rallumer leur yeux éteints, s'achemineront vers leur lampe, le cerveau ivre un instant d'une gloire confuse, hantés du Rythme et dans l'oubli d'exister à une époque qui survit à la beauté.

THE FUTURE PHENOMENON — BY MALLARMÉ.

A pale sky, above the world that is ending through decrepitude, going, perhaps, to pass away with the clouds : shreds of worn-out purple of the sunsets wash off their color in a river sleeping on the horizon, submerged with rays and water. The trees are weary and, beneath their foliage, whitened (by the dust of time rather than that of the roads), rises the canvas house of "Showman of things Past." Many a lamp awaits the gloaming, and brightens the faces of a miserable crowd vanquished by the immortal illness and the sin of ages, of men by the sides of their puny accomplices pregnant with

the miserable fruit with which the world will perish. In the anxious silence of all the eyes supplicating the sun there, which sinks under the water with the desperation of a cry, this is the plain announcement: "No sign-board now regales you with the spectacle that is inside, for there is no painter now capable of giving even a shadow of it. I bring living (and preserved by sovereign science through the years) a Woman of other days. Some kind of folly, naïve and original, an ecstasy of gold, I know not what, by her called her hair, clings with the grace of some material round a face brightened by the blood-red nudity of her lips. In place of vain clothing, she has a body; and her eyes, resembling precious stones! are not worth that look, which comes from her happy flesh: breasts raised as if full of eternal milk, the points toward the sky; the smooth legs, that keep the salt of the first sea." Remembering their poor spouses, bald, morbid, and full of horrors, the husbands press forward: the women, too, from curiosity, gloomily wish to see.

When all shall have contemplated the noble creature, vestige of some epoch already damned, some indifferently, for they will not have had strength to understand, but others, broken-hearted, and with eyelids wet with tears of resignation, will look at each other; while the poets of those times, feeling their dim eyes rekindled, will make their way toward their lamp, their brain for an instant drunk with confused glory, haunted by Rhythm, and forgetful that they exist at an epoch which has survived beauty.

APPENDIX II¹

No. I

The following verses are by Vielé-Griffin, from page 28 of a volume of his Poems:—

OISEAU BLEU COULEUR DU TEMPS

I

Sait-tu l'oubli
D'un vain doux rêve,
Oiseau moqueur
De la forêt?
Le jour pâlit,
La nuit se lève,
Et dans mon cœur
L'ombre a pleuré;

2

O chante-moi
Ta folle gamme,
Car j'ai dormi
Ce jour durant;
Le lâche emoi
Où fut mon âme
Sanglote ennui
Le jour mourant....

¹ The translations in Appendices I., II., and IV., are by Louise Maude. The aim of these renderings has been to keep as close to the originals as

3

Sais-tu le chant
De sa parole
Et de sa voix,
Toi qui redis
Dans le couchant
Ton air frivole
Comme autrefois
Sous les midis ?

4

O chante alors
La mélodie
De son amour,
Mon fol espoir,
Parmi les ors
Et l'incendie
Du vain doux jour
Qui meurt ce soir.

FRANCIS VIELÉ-GRIFFIN.

BLUE BIRD

1

Canst thou forget,
In dreams so vain,
Oh, mocking bird
Of forest deep?
The day doth set,
Night comes again,
My heart has heard
The shadows weep;

3

That music sweet,
Ah, do you know
Her voice and speech?
Your airs so light
You who repeat
In sunset's glow,
As you sang, each,
At noonday's height.

2

Thy tones let flow
In maddening scale,
For I have slept
The livelong day;
Emotions low
In me now wail,
My soul they 've kept:
Light dies away

4

Of my desire,
My hope so bold,
Her love — up, sing,
Sing, 'neath this light,
This flaming fire,
And all the gold
The eve doth bring
Ere comes the night.

No. 2

And here are some verses by the esteemed young poet Verhaeren, which I also take from page 28 of his Works :—

the obscurity of meaning allowed. The sense (or absence of sense) has therefore been more considered than the form of the verses.

ATTIRANCES

Lointainement, et si étrangement pareils,
De grands masques d'argent que la brume recule,
Vaguent, au jour tombant, autour des vieux soleils.

Les doux lointaines ! — et comme, au fond du crépuscule,
Ils nous fixent le cœur, immensément le cœur,
Avec les yeux *défunts de leur* visage d'âme.

C'est toujours du silence, à moins, dans la pâleur
Du soir, un jet de feu sondain, un cri de flamme,
Un départ de lumière inattendu vers Dieu.

On se laisse charmer et troubler de mystère,
Et l'on dirait des morts qui taisent un adieu
Trop mystique, pour être écouté par la terre !

Sont-ils le souvenir matériel et clair
Des éphèbes chrétiens couchés aux catacombes
Parmi les lys ? Sont-ils leur regard et leur chair ?

Ou seul, ce qui survit de merveilleux aux tombes
De ceux qui sont partis, vers leurs rêves, un soir,
Conquérir la folie à l'assaut des nuées ?

Lointainement, combien nous les sentons vouloir
Un peu d'amour pour leurs œuvres destituées,
Pour leur errance et leur tristesse aux horizons.

Toujours ! aux horizons du cœur et des pensées,
Alors que les vieux soirs éclatent en blasons
Soudains, pour les gloires noires et angoissées.

ÉMILE VERHAEREN,
Poèmes.

ATTRACTIONS

Large masks of silver, by mists drawn away,
So strangely alike, yet so far apart,
Float round the old suns when faileth the day.

They transfix our heart, so immensely our heart,
Those distances mild, in the twilight deep,
Looking out of dead faces with their spirit eyes.

All around is now silence, except when there leap
In the pallor of evening, with fiery cries,
Some fountains of flame that God-ward do fly.

Mysterious trouble and charms us infold,
You might think that the dead spoke a silent good-by,
Oh! too mystical far on earth to be told!

Are they the memories, material and bright,
Of the Christian youths that in catacombs sleep
'Mid the lilies? Are they their flesh or their sight?

Or the marvel alone that survives, in the deep,
Of those that, one night, returned to their dream
Of conquering folly by assaulting the skies?

For their destitute works — we feel it seems,
For a little love their longing cries
From horizons far — for their errands and pain.

In horizons ever of heart and thought,
While the evenings old in bright blaze wane
Suddenly, for black glories anguish fraught.

No. 3

And the following is a poem by Moréas, evidently an admirer of Greek beauty. It is from page 28 of a volume of his Poems: —

ENONE AU CLAIR VISAGE

Enone, j'avais cru qu'en aimant ta beauté
Où l'âme avec le corps trouvent leur unité,
J'allais, m'affermissant et le cœur et l'esprit,
Monter jusqu'à cela qui jamais ne périt,
N'ayant été créée, qui n'est froideur ou feu,
Qui n'est beau quelque part et laid en autre lieu;
Et me flattais encor' d'une belle harmonie
Que j'eusse composé du meilleur et du pire,

Ainsi que le chanteur qui chérit Polimnie,
 En accordant le grave avec l'aigu, retire
 Un son bien élevé sur les nerfs de sa lyre.
 Mais mon courage, hélas ! se pâmant comme mort,
 M'enseigna que le trait qui m'avait fait amant
 Ne fut pas de cet arc que courbe sans effort
 La Vénus qui naquit du mâle seulement,
 Mais que j'avais souffert cette Vénus dernière,
 Qui a le cœur couard, né d'une faible mère.
 Et pourtant, ce mauvais garçon, chasseur habile,
 Qui charge son carquois de sagette subtile,
 Qui secoue en riant sa torche, pour un jour,
 Qui ne pose jamais que sur de tendres fleurs,
 C'est sur un teint charmant qu'il essuie les pleurs,
 Et c'est encore un Dieu, Enone, cet Amour.
 Mais, laisse, les oiseaux du printemps sont partis,
 Et je vois les rayons du soleil amortis.
 Enone, ma douleur, harmonieux visage,
 Superbe humilité, doux honnête langage,
 Hier me remirant dans cet étang glacé
 Qui au bout du jardin se couvre de feuillage,
 Sur ma face je vis que les jours ont passé.

JEAN MORÉAS.

ENONE

Enone, in loving thy beauty, I thought,
 Where the soul and the body to union are brought,
 That mounting by steadying my heart and my mind,
 In that which can't perish, myself I should find.
 For it ne'er was created, is not ugly and fair;
 Is not coldness in one part, while on fire it is there.
 Yes, I flattered myself that a harmony fine
 I'd succeed to compose of the worst and the best,
 Like the bard who adores Polyhymnia divine,
 And mingling sounds different from the nerves of his lyre,
 From the grave and the smart draws melodies higher.
 But, alas! my courage, so faint and nigh spent,
 The dart that has struck me proves without fail
 Not to be from that bow which is easily bent
 By the Venus that's born alone of the male.
 No, 't was that other Venus that caused me to smart,
 Born of frail mother with cowardly heart.
 And yet that naughty lad, that little hunter bold,

Who laughs and shakes his flowery torch just for a day,
 Who never rests but upon tender flowers and gay,
 On sweetest skin who dries the tears his eyes that fill,
 Yet oh, Enone mine, a God's that Cupid still.
 Let it pass; for the birds of the Spring are away,
 And dying I see the sun's lingering ray.
 Enone, my sorrow, oh, harmonious face,
 Humility grand, words of virtue and grace,
 I looked yestere'en in the pond frozen fast,
 Strewn with leaves at the end of the garden's fair space,
 And I read in my face that those days are now past.

No. 4

And this is also from page 28 of a thick book, full of similar poems, by M. Montesquiou.

BERCEUSE D'OMBRE

Des formes, des formes, des formes
 Blanche, bleue, et rose, et d'or
 Descendront du haut des ormes
 Sur l'enfant qui se rendort.
 Des formes !

Des plumes, des plumes, des plumes
 Pour composer un doux nid.
 Midi sonne : les enclumes
 Cessent ; la rumeur finit
 Des plumes !

Des roses, des roses, des roses
 Pour embaumer son sommeil,
 Vos pétales sont moroses
 Près du sourire vermeil.
 O roses !

Des ailes, des ailes, des ailes
 Pour bourdonner à son front,
 Abeilles et demoiselles,
 Des rythmes qui berceront.
 Des ailes !

WHAT IS ART?

Des branches, des branches, des branches
 Pour tresser un pavillon,
 Par où des clartés moins franches
 Descendront sur l'oisillon.
 Des branches !

Des songes, des songes, des songes
 Dans ses pensers entr' ouverts
 Glissez un peu de mensonges
 A voir le vie au travers
 Des songes !

Des fées, des fées, des fées
 Pour filer leurs écheveaux
 Des mirages, de bouffées
 Dans tous ces petits cerveaux.
 Des fées !

Des anges, des anges, des anges
 Pour emporter dans l'éther
 Les petits enfants étranges
 Qui ne veulent pas rester
 Nos anges !

COMTE ROBERT DE MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC,
Les Hortensias Bleus.

THE SHADOW LULLABY

Oh forms, oh forms, oh forms
 White, blue, and gold, and red
 Descending from the elm trees,
 On sleeping baby's head.
 Oh forms!

Oh feathers, feathers, feathers
 To make a cozy nest.
 Twelve striking: stops the clamor;
 The anvils are at rest
 Oh feathers !

Oh roses, roses, roses
 To scent his sleep awhile,

Pale are your fragrant petals
Beside his ruby smile.
Oh roses !

Oh wings, oh wings, oh wings
Of bees and dragon-flies,
To hum around his forehead,
And lull him with your sighs.
Oh wings !

Branches, branches, branches
A shady bower to twine,
Through which, oh daylight, faintly
Descend on birdie mine.
Branches !

Oh dreams, oh dreams, oh dreams
Into his opening mind,
Let in a little falsehood
With sights of life behind.
Dreams !

Oh fairies, fairies, fairies
To twine and twist their threads
With puffs of phantom visions
Into these little heads.
Fairies !

Angels, angels, angels
To the ether far away,
Those children strange to carry
That here don't wish to stay
Our angels !

APPENDIX III

These are the contents of "The Nibelung's Ring":—

The first part tells that the nymphs, the daughters of the Rhine, for some reason guard gold in the Rhine, and sing: Weia, Waga, Woge du Welle, Walle zur Wiege, Wagala-weia, Wallala, Weiala, Weia, and so forth.

These singing nymphs are pursued by a gnome (a nibelung) who desires to seize them. The gnome cannot catch any of them. Then the nymphs guarding

the gold tell the gnome just what they ought to keep secret, namely, that whoever renounces love will be able to steal the gold they are guarding. And the gnome renounces love, and steals the gold. This ends the first scene.

In the second scene a god and a goddess lie in a field in sight of a castle which giants have built for them. Presently they wake up and are pleased with the castle, and they relate that in payment for this work they must give the goddess Freia to the giants. The giants come for their pay. But the god Wotan objects to parting with Freia. The giants get angry. The gods hear that the gnome has stolen the gold, promise to confiscate it, and to pay the giants with it. But the giants won't trust them, and seize the goddess Freia in pledge.

The third scene takes place underground. The gnome Alberich, who stole the gold, for some reason beats a gnome, Mime, and takes from him a helmet which has the power both of making people invisible and of turning them into other animals. The gods, Wotan and others, appear and quarrel with one another and with the gnomes, and wish to take the gold, but Alberich won't give it up, and (like everybody all through the piece) behaves in a way to insure his own ruin. He puts on the helmet, and becomes first a dragon and then a toad. The gods catch the toad, take the helmet off it, and carry Alberich away with them.

Scene IV. The gods bring Alberich to their home, and order him to command his gnomes to bring them all the gold. The gnomes bring it. Alberich gives up the gold, but keeps a magic ring. The gods take the ring. So Alberich curses the ring, and says it is to bring misfortune on any one who has it. The giants appear; they bring the goddess Freia, and demand her ransom. They stick up staves of Freia's height, and gold is poured in between these staves: this is to be the ransom. There is not enough gold, so the helmet is thrown in, and they also demand the ring. Wotan refuses to give it up, but

the goddess Erda appears and commands him to do so, because it brings misfortune. Wotan gives it up. Freia is released. The giants, having received the ring, fight, and one of them kills the other. This ends the Prelude, and we come to the First Day.

The scene shows a house in a tree. Siegmund runs in tired, and lies down. Sieglinda, the mistress of the house (and wife of Hunding), gives him a drugged draught, and they fall in love with each other. Sieglinda's husband comes home, learns that Siegmund belongs to a hostile race, and wishes to fight him next day; but Sieglinda drugs her husband, and comes to Siegmund. Siegmund discovers that Sieglinda is his sister, and that his father drove a sword into the tree so that no one can get it out. Siegmund pulls the sword out, and commits incest with his sister.

Act II. Siegmund is to fight with Hunding. The gods discuss the question to whom they shall award the victory. Wotan, approving of Siegmund's incest with his sister, wishes to spare him, but, under pressure from his wife, Fricka, he orders the Valkyrie Brünnhilda to kill Siegmund. Siegmund goes to fight; Sieglinda faints. Brünnhilda appears and wishes to slay Siegmund. Siegmund wishes to kill Sieglinda also, but Brünnhilda does not allow it; so he fights with Hunding. Brünnhilda defends Siegmund, but Wotan defends Hunding. Siegmund's sword breaks, and he is killed. Sieglinda runs away.

Act III. The Valkyries (divine Amazons) are on the stage. The Valkyrie Brünnhilda arrives on horseback, bringing Siegmund's body. She is flying from Wotan, who is chasing her for her disobedience. Wotan catches her, and as a punishment dismisses her from her post as a Valkyrie. He casts a spell on her, so that she has to go to sleep and to continue asleep until a man wakes her. When some one wakes her she will fall in love with him. Wotan kisses her; she falls asleep. He lets off fire, which surrounds her.

We now come to the Second Day. The gnome Mime forges a sword in a wood. Siegfried appears. He is a

son born from the incest of brother with sister (Sieg-mund with Sieglinda), and has been brought up in this wood by the gnome. In general the motives of the actions of everybody in this production are quite unintelligible. Siegfried learns his own origin, and that the broken sword was his father's. He orders Mime to reforge it, and then goes off. Wotan comes in the guise of a wanderer, and relates what will happen: that he who has not learnt to fear will forge the sword, and will defeat everybody. The gnome conjectures that this is Siegfried, and wants to poison him. Siegfried returns, forges his father's sword, and runs off, shouting, Heiho! heiho! heiho! Ho! ho! Aha! oho! aha! Heiaho! heiaho! heiaho! Ho! ho! Hahei! hoho! hahei!

And we get to Act II. Alberich sits guarding a giant, who, in form of a dragon, guards the gold he has received. Wotan appears, and for some unknown reason foretells that Siegfried will come and kill the dragon. Alberich wakes the dragon, and asks him for the ring, promising to defend him from Siegfried. The dragon won't give up the ring. Exit Alberich. Mime and Siegfried appear. Mime hopes the dragon will teach Siegfried to fear. But Siegfried does not fear. He drives Mime away and kills the dragon, after which he puts his finger, smeared with the dragon's blood, to his lips. This enables him to know men's secret thoughts, as well as the language of birds. The birds tell him where the treasure and the ring are, and also that Mime wishes to poison him. Mime returns, and says out loud that he wishes to poison Siegfried. This is meant to signify that Siegfried, having tasted dragon's blood, understands people's secret thoughts. Siegfried, having learnt Mime's intentions, kills him. The birds tell Siegfried where Brünnhilda is, and he goes to find her.

Act III. Wotan calls up Erda. Erda prophesies to Wotan, and gives him advice. Siegfried appears, quarrels with Wotan, and they fight. Suddenly Siegfried's sword breaks Wotan's spear, which had been more powerful than anything else. Siegfried goes into

the fire to Brünnhilda: kisses her; she wakes up, abandons her divinity, and throws herself into Siegfried's arms.

Third Day. Prelude. Three Norns plait a golden rope, and talk about the future. They go away. Siegfried and Brünnhilda appear. Siegfried takes leave of her, gives her the ring, and goes away.

Act I. By the Rhine. A king wants to get married, and also to give his sister in marriage. Hagen, the king's wicked brother, advises him to marry Brünnhilda and to give his sister to Siegfried. Siegfried appears; they give him a drugged draught, which makes him forget all the past and fall in love with the king's sister, Guttrune. So he rides off with Gunther, the king, to get Brünnhilda to be the king's bride. The scene changes. Brünnhilda sits with the ring. A Valkyrie comes to her and tells her that Wotan's spear is broken, and advises her to give the ring to the Rhine nymphs. Siegfried comes, and by means of the magic helmet turns himself into Gunther, demands the ring from Brünnhilda, seizes it, and drags her off to sleep with him.

Act II. By the Rhine. Alberich and Hagen discuss how to get the ring. Siegfried comes, tells how he has obtained a bride for Gunther and spent the night with her, but put a sword between himself and her. Brünnhilda rides up, recognizes the ring on Siegfried's hand, and declares that it was he, and not Gunther, who was with her. Hagen stirs everybody up against Siegfried, and decides to kill him next day when hunting.

Act III. Again the nymphs in the Rhine relate what has happened. Siegfried, who has lost his way, appears. The nymphs ask him for the ring, but he won't give it up. Hunters appear. Siegfried tells the story of his life. Hagen then gives him a draught, which causes his memory to return to him. Siegfried relates how he aroused and obtained Brünnhilda, and every one is astonished. Hagen stabs him in the back, and the scene is changed. Guttrune meets the corpse of Siegfried. Gunther and Hagen quarrel about the ring, and

Hagen kills Gunther. Brünnhilda cries. Hagen wishes to take the ring from Siegfried's hand, but the hand of the corpse raises itself threateningly. Brünnhilda takes the ring from Siegfried's hand, and when Siegfried's corpse is carried to the pyre, she gets on to a horse and leaps into the fire. The Rhine rises, and the waves reach the pyre. In the river are three nymphs. Hagen throws himself into the fire to get the ring, but the nymphs seize him and carry him off. One of them holds the ring; and that is the end of the matter.

The impression obtainable from my recapitulation is, of course, incomplete. But however incomplete it may be, it is certainly infinitely more favorable than the impression which results from reading the four booklets in which the work is printed.

APPENDIX IV

Translations of French poems and prose quoted in Chapter X.

BAUDELAIRE'S "FLOWERS OF EVIL"

No. XXIV

I adore thee as much as the vaults of night,
O vase full of grief, taciturnity great,
And I love thee the more because of thy flight.
It seemeth, my night's beautifier, that you
Still heap up those leagues — yes ! ironically heap !
That divide from my arms the immensity blue.

I advance to attack, I climb to assault,
Like a choir of young worms at a corpse in the vault;
Thy coldness, oh cruel, implacable beast !
Yet heightens thy beauty, on which my eyes feast !

BAUDELAIRE'S "FLOWERS OF EVIL"

No. XXXVI

DUELLUM

Two warriors come running, to fight they begin,
With gleaming and blood they bespatter the air;
These games, and this clatter of arms, is the din
Of youth that's a prey to the surgings of love.

The rapiers are broken! and so is our youth,
But the dagger's avenged, dear! and so is the sword,
By the nail that is steeled and the hardened tooth.
Oh, the fury of hearts aged and ulcered by love!

In the ditch, where the ounce and the pard have their lair,
Our heroes have rolled in an angry embrace;
Their skin blooms on brambles that erewhile were bare.

That ravine is a friend-inhabited hell!
Then let us roll in, oh woman inhuman,
To immortalize hatred that nothing can quell!

FROM BAUDELAIRE'S PROSE WORK ENTITLED "LITTLE POEMS"

THE STRANGER

Whom dost thou love best? say, enigmatical man — thy father,
thy mother, thy brother, or thy sister?

"I have neither father, nor mother, nor sister, nor brother."

Thy friends?

"You there use an expression the meaning of which till now
remains unknown to me."

Thy country?

"I ignore in what latitude it is situated."

Beauty?

"I would gladly love her, goddess and immortal."

Gold?

"I hate it as you hate God."

Then what do you love, extraordinary stranger?

"I love the clouds.... the clouds that pass.... there.... the mar-
velous clouds!"

WHAT IS ART?

BAUDELAIRE'S PROSE POEM

THE SOUP AND THE CLOUDS

My beloved little silly was giving me my dinner, and I was contemplating, through the open window of the dining-room, those moving architectures which God makes out of vapors, the marvelous constructions of the impalpable. And I said to myself, amid my contemplations, "All these phantasmagoria are almost as beautiful as the eyes of my beautiful beloved, the monstrous little silly with the green eyes."

Suddenly I felt the violent blow of a fist on my back, and I heard a harsh, charming voice, an hysterical voice, as it were hoarse with brandy, the voice of my dear little well-beloved, saying, "Are you going to eat your soup soon, you d—— b—— of a dealer in clouds?"

BAUDELAIRE'S PROSE POEM

THE GALLANT MARKSMAN

As the carriage was passing through the forest, he ordered it to be stopped near a shooting-gallery, saying that he wished to shoot off a few bullets to *kill* Time. To kill this monster, is it not the most ordinary and the most legitimate occupation of every one? And he gallantly offered his arm to his dear, delicious, and execrable wife — that mysterious woman to whom he owed so much pleasure, so much pain, and perhaps also a large part of his genius.

Several bullets struck far from the intended mark — one even penetrated the ceiling; and as the charming creature laughed madly, mocking her husband's awkwardness, he turned abruptly toward her and said, "Look at that doll there on the right with the haughty mien and her nose in the air; well, dear angel, *I imagine to myself that it is you!*" And he closed his eyes and pulled the trigger. The doll was neatly decapitated.

Then, bowing toward his dear one, his delightful, execrable wife, his inevitable pitiless muse, and kissing her hand respectfully, he added, "Ah! my dear angel, how I thank you for my skill!"

VERLAINE'S "FORGOTTEN AIRS"

No. I

"The wind in the plain
Suspends its breath." — FAVART.

'T is ecstasy languishing,
Amorous fatigue,
Of woods all the shudderings

Embraced by the breeze,
'T is the choir of small voices
Toward the gray trees.

Oh, the frail and fresh murmuring !
The twitter and buzz,
The soft cry resembling
That 's expired by the grass
Oh, the roll of the pebbles
'Neath waters that pass !

Oh, this soul that is groaning
In sleepy complaint !
In us is it moaning ?
In me and in you ?
Low anthem exhaling
While soft falls the dew.

VERLAINE'S "FORGOTTEN AIRS"

No. VIII

In the unending
Dullness of this land,
Uncertain the snow
Is gleaming like sand.

No kind of brightness
In copper-hued sky,
The moon you might see
Now live and now die.

Gray float the oak trees ---
Cloudlike they seem ---
Of neighboring forests,
The mists in between.

Wolves hungry and lean,
And famishing crow,
What happens to you
When acid winds blow ?

In the unending
Dullness of this land,
Uncertain the snow
Is gleaming like sand.

WHAT IS ART?

SONG BY MAETERLINCK

When he went away,
 (Then I heard the door)
 When he went away,
 On her lips a smile there lay .

Back he came to her,
 (Then I heard the lamp)
 Back he came to her,
 Someone else was there ...

It was death I met,
 (And I heard her soul)
 It was death I met,
 For her he 's waiting yet ...

Someone came to say,
 (Child, I am afraid)
 Someone came to say
 That he would go away ...

With my lamp alight,
 (Child, I am afraid)
 With my lamp alight,
 Approached I in affright ...

To one door I came,
 (Child, I am afraid)
 To one door I came,
 A shudder shook the flame ..

At the second door,
 (Child, I am afraid)
 At the second door
 Forth words of flame did pour ..

To the third I came,
 (Child, I am afraid)
 To the third I came,
 Then died the little flame ...

Should he one day return
 Then what shall we say?
 Waiting, tell him, one
 And dying for him lay ...

If he asks for you,
 Say what answer then?
Give him my gold ring
 And answer not a thing

Should he question me
 Concerning the last hour?
Say I smiled for fear
 That he should shed a tear ...

Should he question more
 Without knowing me?
Like a sister speak;
 Suffering he may be

Should he question why
 Empty is the hall?
Show the gaping door,
 The lamp alight no more ...



PORTRAIT OF TOLSTOÏ.

From the painting by Repin.

By permission of Berlin Photographic Co.

WHAT IS RELIGION?

WHAT IS RELIGION?

AND WHAT IS ITS ESSENCE?

(February, 1902)

CHAPTER I

ALWAYS in all human societies, at a certain period of their existence a time comes when their religion begins to diverge from its fundamental meaning, then diverges more and more, loses this fundamental meaning, and finally crystallizes into permanently established forms; — when its influence upon the life of men grows weaker and weaker.

At such periods, the educated minority, though no longer believing in the existing religious teaching, still pretend to believe, finding this religion necessary for holding the masses in the established order of life; whilst the masses, although adhering by the force of inertia to the established religion, are no longer guided in their lives by religious demands, but only by popular customs and state laws.

So it has been, many times, in many human communities. But what is now taking place in our Christian Society has never before occurred. It has never occurred before that the ruling and more educated minority, which has the chief influence on the masses, not only disbelieved in the existing religion, but was certain that in its time religion was no longer necessary at all, and that it taught those who doubted the truth of the accepted faith not some other, more rational and comprehensible religion than that existing, but even

persuaded them that religion in general had outlived its time, and had become not only a useless but even a harmful organ of social life, something like the appendix of the cæcum in the human organism.

Religion is studied by this class of men not as something which we know through our inner experience, but as an external phenomenon, a disease as it were to which some people are subject, and which we can understand only in its external symptoms.

Religion, according to some of these men, has sprung from the spiritualization of all the phenomena of nature (animism). According to others, from the idea of the possibility of communicating with departed ancestors. According to others again, from the fear of the powers of nature. And as science has proved — the scientists of our day further argue — that trees and stone cannot be animated, and deceased ancestors are no longer conscious of what the living do, and the phenomena of nature are explicable by natural causes, — therefore the necessity for religion and for all those restraints which people impose upon themselves as the result of religious beliefs has disappeared. In the opinion of scientists there once existed a period of unenlightenment — the religious period. This was outlived by mankind long ago, but occasional atavistic symptoms remain. Then there came the metaphysical period, which also has been outlived. And now, we, the enlightened generations, live in the scientific period, — of positive science, — which replaces religion and leads mankind to a lofty degree of development which it could never have attained whilst it submitted to superstitious religious teaching.

At the beginning of 1901 the celebrated French scientist Berthelot uttered a speech (*Revue de Paris*, January, 1901), in which he communicated to his audience the idea that the age of religion had passed, and that it must now be replaced by science. I cite this speech because it is the first to my hand and because it was uttered in the capital of the cultured world by a universally recognized scientist. But the same idea has been

expressed continually and everywhere from philosophical treatises down to newspaper articles.

Mons. Berthelot says in this speech that there were formerly two principles which moved mankind, Force and Religion. These motive powers have become unnecessary now, because their place has been taken by science. By science Mons. Berthelot evidently implies (as all men who believe in it do) a science which embraces the whole sphere of human knowledge, each branch classified according to the degree of its importance, and the whole harmoniously bound together. A science possessing such methods that all the data it discovers present one unquestionable truth. But such a science does not exist, as a matter of fact. What is called science to-day consists of a haphazard heap of information, united by nothing, often utterly unnecessary, and not only failing to present one unquestionable truth, but as often as not containing the grossest errors to-day put forward as truths, and to-morrow overthrown. It is evident, therefore, that the very thing which in Mons. Berthelot's opinion is to replace religion, does not exist. And therefore the assertion of Mons. Berthelot and those who agree with him, that science will replace religion, is entirely arbitrary, and is founded upon an unjustifiable belief in an Infallible Science, exactly resembling the belief in an Infallible Church.

And yet people who call themselves and are regarded as scientists are quite certain that already there exists a science which must and can replace religion, and even has replaced it.

"Religion has outlived its day; to believe in anything except science is ignorance. Science will arrange all that is necessary, and one should be guided in life by science alone." So think and say both the scientists themselves and the crowd, which, although very far from being scientific, yet believes the scientists and together with them asserts that religion is an outlived superstition and that our life should be guided only by science, — that is, in reality, by nothing, because science, according to its own acknowledged definition as

the investigation of everything that exists, cannot furnish any guidance for man's life.

CHAPTER II

THE scientists of our times have decided that religion is unnecessary and that science will replace or already has replaced it; and yet, now as before, no human society or rational man ever has lived or can live without religion. (I say "rational" man, because an irrational man can live as an animal, without religion.) A rational man cannot live without religion, because religion alone gives the rational man the necessary guidance as to what he should do, and what he should do first and what next. A rational man cannot live without religion precisely because reason is an element of his nature. Every animal is guided in its actions — except those to which it is attracted by the direct demands of its desires — by consideration about the immediate results of its actions. Having considered these results by the aid of those means of comprehension which it possesses, the animal conforms its actions to the results, and always acts under the influence of these considerations in one and the same way, without wavering. Thus, for instance, a bee flies in search of honey and brings it home into its hive because in winter it will require the food it has collected for itself and the young; and beyond these considerations it knows nothing and is unable to know anything. A bird acts in the same way when it makes its nest, or migrates from the north to the south and *vice versa*. And so also does every animal when it commits any act, not from a direct immediate necessity, but under the influence of considerations about expected results.

But it is not so with man. The difference between a man and an animal consists in this, that the perceptive faculties in the animal are limited by what we call instinct, whereas reason is the essential perceptive faculty of man.

A bee collecting its food can have no doubts about

the rightness or wrongness of what it is doing. But a man gathering in the harvest cannot but reflect whether he is destroying for the future the growth of the wheat or fruit, and whether by thus gathering he is not depriving his neighbor of his food. He also cannot but think of the future of the children whom he feeds; and of many other things. The most important questions of conduct in life cannot be solved definitely by a rational man, precisely because of the multitude of results which he cannot help seeing. Every rational man feels, if he does not know, that in the most important affairs of life he cannot be guided either by the impulse of personal feelings or by considerations of the immediate results of his activity, because he sees too many different results, and often contradictory ones; results, that is, which with equal probability can be either beneficent or harmful, both to himself and to others.

There is a legend about an angel who descended to earth into a God-fearing family and killed a child in its cradle; when asked why he had done this, he replied that the child would have become a great malefactor and would have brought misery to its family.

But not only in the question, Which human life is useful, useless, or harmful? — not one of the most important questions of life can be solved, for a rational man, by considerations about immediate relations and results. A rational man cannot be content with the considerations which direct the actions of animals. Man may regard himself as an animal amongst animals, living from day to day; he may regard himself as a member of a family or of a society or of a nation living from century to century; he may, and even necessarily must (because his reason irresistibly attracts him to this), regard himself as a part of the whole Infinite Universe existing infinitely. And therefore a rational man is obliged to and always does do, in relation to the infinitely small circumstances of life which influence his actions, what in mathematics is called integration, that is, besides his relations to his immediate circumstances,

he must establish his relation to the whole universe, infinite in time and space, and conceived as a whole. And such an establishment by man of his relation to that whole of which he feels himself a part and from which he obtains guidance for his actions, is precisely what was and is called Religion. And therefore religion always has been and cannot cease to be an indispensable and permanent condition of the life of a rational man and of rational humanity.

CHAPTER III

AND it was in this way that the men who were not bereft of the capacity of the higher (that is, the religious) consciousness, which distinguishes man from the animal, always understood religion. The oldest and most common definition of religion, from which the word itself is derived (*religio* — *religare*, to bind back), is that religion is a connection between man and God. "*Les obligations de l'homme envers Dieu, voilà la religion*" ("Man's obligations toward God ; that is religion"), says Vovenargue. A similar meaning is attached to religion by Schleiermacher and Fehrbach, who recognize as the foundation of religion man's consciousness of his dependence on God. "*La religion est une affaire entre chaque homme et Dieu.*" — Beile. ("Religion is a matter between every man and God.") "*La religion est le résultat des besoins de l'âme et des effets de l'intelligence.*" — B. Constant. ("Religion is the result of the needs of the soul and the effects of the reason.") "*Religion is a certain method by which man realizes his relation to the superhuman and mysterious powers from whom he regards himself dependent.*" — Goblet d'Alviella. "*Religion is the definition of man's life by the connection of the human with that mysterious spirit, the power of which over the universe and himself he recognizes and with which he feels himself united.*" — A. Reville.

So that the essence of religion was always and is still understood by men who are not bereft of the highest

human capacity, as the establishment by man of his relation to the Infinite Being or Beings whose power he feels over himself. And however different this relation has been for different peoples at different times, it has always determined for man his destination in the world, from which naturally followed the guidance of his actions also. A Jew understood his relation to the Infinite as that of a member of a people chosen by God in preference to all other peoples, and who must therefore keep the Covenant concluded between God and this people. A Greek understood his relation as that of a being dependent upon the representatives of infinity, the gods, and who must therefore do what was pleasing to the gods. A Brahman understood his relation to the Infinite Brahma by considering himself a manifestation of this Brahma, and that it was his duty to strive to unite with this highest being, by the renunciation of life. A Buddhist understood and understands his relation to the Infinite as that of one who, passing from one form of life into another, inevitably suffers, and that as these sufferings proceed from passions and desires, therefore one should strive to destroy all passions and desires and so pass into Nirvana.

Every religion is an establishment by man of his relation to the Infinite Existence of which he feels himself a part, and from which relation he obtains the guidance for his conduct. And therefore any religion which does not establish the relation of man to the Infinite, as, for instance, Idolatry, or Magic, is not a religion, but only a corruption. And if a religion, although establishing a relation of man to God yet establishes it by assertions which disagree with reason and the modern knowledge of man so that man cannot believe such assertions, then this also is not religion, but an imitation. If a religion does not connect the life of man with the Infinite Existence, this also is not religion; and demands of faith in propositions from which no definite direction of man's actions follows, are also not religion.

True religion is the establishment by man of such a relation to the Infinite Life around him, as, while connect-

ing his life with this Infinitude and directing his conduct, is also in agreement with his reason and with human knowledge.

CHAPTER IV

THE modern scientists, notwithstanding that never and at no time have people lived, nor do they now live, without religion, say, like Molière's involuntary doctor who asserted that the liver is on the left side: "‘We have changed all that,’ and one can and should live without religion." But religion remains as it always was, the chief motive power, the heart of the life of human societies, and without it, as without the heart, there can be no rational life. There have been, and there are, many different religions, because the expression of the relation of man to the Infinite, to God, or the gods, is different at different times, according to the different degrees of development of different nations; but no society of men since men have become rational beings could ever live and therefore never did live and cannot live without religion.

It is true that there have been (and still occur) periods in the life of nations when the existing religion was so distorted and so far behind life that it no longer guided man. But this cessation of the influence of religion, which has occurred at certain moments with every religion, has been only temporary. Religion, like everything vital, has the capacity of being born, developing, growing old, and dying, of reviving again, and reviving always in a more perfect form than before. After the period of the highest development of religion there always follows a period of weakness and lifelessness, after which again there generally follows a period of regeneration and of the establishment of a religious teaching more clear and rational than before. Such periods of development, decline, and regeneration have occurred in all religions: in the profound Brahman religion, in which the moment it began to grow old and to crystallize in coarse, permanently established forms de-

viated from its fundamental conception, there appeared on the one hand the revival of Brahmanism itself, and on the other the lofty teaching of Buddhism, which advanced mankind's understanding of its relation to the Infinite. A similar decline occurred in the Greek and Roman religion, and here also, after the decline had reached its lowest point, Christianity appeared. The same occurred with Church Christianity, which degenerated in Byzantium into idolatry and polytheism, at which time, as a counterbalance to this perverted Christianity, there appeared on the one side Paulicianism, and on the other, in opposition to the teaching of Trinity and Maryolatry, the severe Mohammedanism, with its fundamental dogma of One God. The same thing happened also with the Papal Medieval Christianity, which called forth the Reformation. So that periods of the decline of religious influence upon the majority of men present a necessary condition of the life and development of all religious teachings. This proceeds from the fact that every religious teaching in its true meaning, however crude it may be, always establishes the relation of man to the Infinite, identical for all men. Every religion recognizes man as equally insignificant in relation to Infinity;—and therefore every religion always contains the idea of the equality of all men before that which it regards as God, whether that be lightning, the wind, a tree, an animal, a hero, a deceased or even a live king, as it was in Rome. So that the recognition of the equality of men is necessarily an essential feature of every religion. But since in reality never and nowhere has there existed, nor now exists, an equality between men, therefore the moment a new religion appeared, which always included the recognition of the equality of men, then immediately those to whom inequality was advantageous endeavored to conceal this essential feature, and distorted the teaching itself. And this was what occurred always and everywhere, when a new religion appeared.

And this occurred, in the majority of cases, not consciously, but merely because men to whom inequality

was advantageous (those in power, and the wealthy), in order to feel themselves in the right in the face of the accepted teaching without altering their position, tried by every means to attribute to the new religious teaching a meaning which would allow inequality to be possible. And this distortion of the teaching, which allowed those in power over others to consider themselves in the right, being naturally transmitted to the masses, convinced them also that their submission to those in power was a demand of the religion they professed.

CHAPTER V

EVERY human activity is called forth by three influences: Feeling, Reason, and Suggestion (the suggestion which medical men call Hypnotism). Sometimes man acts only under the influence of feeling, and strives to attain his desires. Sometimes he acts under the influence of reason alone, which indicates to him his duties. Sometimes, and most often, man acts because he himself or other men have suggested to him a certain activity and he unconsciously submits to the suggestion. In normal conditions of life all three influences participate in man's activity. Feeling draws man toward a certain activity; reason verifies the agreement of this activity with the surrounding conditions, with the past, and with the anticipated future; and suggestion compels man to fulfil, without feeling, or thinking, the act elicited by feeling and approved by reason. If there were no feeling, man would undertake nothing; if there were no reason, man would simultaneously yield himself to many contradictory feelings, harmful to himself and others; if there were no capacity of submitting to one's own or other people's suggestion, man would have to experience that feeling which prompted him to a certain action, unceasingly, and continually to exert his reason in testing the expediency of his reason. And therefore all these three influences are indispensable to every human activity, however simple. If a man is moving

in a certain direction it is because his feeling has prompted him to move from one place to another, his reason has approved of this intention, has indicated the means to realize it (in the given case, walking along a certain road), and the muscles of his body obey. And the man advances in the desired direction. While he is advancing, his feeling and reason become free for another activity, which could not occur if the capacity of submitting to suggestion did not exist. So it is with all human activities, and so also with the most important of all—the religious activity. Feeling calls forth the necessity of establishing the relation of man to God; reason defines this relation; and suggestion prompts man to the activity which follows from this relation. But it takes place thus only while religion has not yet suffered distortion. As soon, however, as this distortion commences, suggestion becomes stronger and stronger, and the activities of feeling and reason weaker and weaker. As to the methods of suggestion, they are everywhere and always the same. They consist in profiting by those conditions of man when he is most susceptible to suggestion (childhood, and during important events in life—deaths, births, marriages), to influence him by works of art: architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dramatic performances,—and in this state of susceptibility, similar to that attained over separate individuals by hypnotic sleep, to incite him to that which is desired by the inciters.

This phenomenon is observable in all the old religious teachings: in the lofty teaching of Brahmanism, degenerated into a gross worship of innumerable images in various temples with singing and incense burning; and in the ancient Hebrew religion as preached by the prophets, transformed into the worship of Jehovah in an imposing temple with solemn hymns and processions; in transcendental Buddhism, degenerated, with its monasteries and images of Buddha, with its innumerable stately rites, into Occult Lamaism; and in Taoism, with its magic and exorcism.

Always, and in all religious teachings, when they begin

to be distorted, their guardians, having brought men into a state of weakened mental activity, use all their efforts to instil into them what they think necessary. And in all religions it was necessary to instil the same three doctrines which serve as the foundation for all the distortions to which all degenerating religions are submitted. Firstly, that a certain class of men exist who alone can be the mediators between men and God or gods; secondly, that miracles have occurred or are occurring which prove and corroborate the truth of that which is asserted by the mediators between men and God; and thirdly, that there are certain words, repeated verbally or written in books, which express the unchangeable will of God or gods, and therefore are sacred and infallible. And as soon as these doctrines are accepted under hypnotic influence, then all which is asserted by the mediators between God and men is accepted as sacred truth, and the chief aim of the distortion of religion is attained; — not only the concealment of the law of human equality, but also the establishment and confirmation of the greatest inequality, the division of men into castes, into men and Yogi, into Orthodox and heretics, saints and sinners. This has taken place and is taking place with Christianity: complete inequality has been recognized, and men are divided not only in the understanding of the teaching, into clergy and laity, but also in relation to social position, into those who have power and those who must submit to power; and this is recognized as established by God Himself according to the teaching of Paul.

CHAPTER VI

THE inequality of men, not only as clergy and laity, but also as rich and poor, master and slaves, has been established by the Christian Church-Religion in as definite and rigid a form as in other religions. And yet to judge by the data we have concerning the primitive condition of Christianity, and by the teaching expressed

in the Gospels, it would seem that the chief methods of distortion used in other religions had been foreseen, and a distinct warning against them uttered. Against a caste of priests it was distinctly said that no one can be another's teacher ("Be not ye called Rabbi. . . . And call no man your father. . . . Neither be ye called masters"); against attributing a sacred meaning to books it was said that it is the spirit which is important and not the letter, and that men should not believe human traditions, and that all the law and the prophets, that is, all the books regarded as Holy Writ, are summed up in this saying, that one should act toward one's neighbors as one would wish them to act toward oneself. If nothing is said against the miracles, and if in the Gospel itself miracles are described as if performed by Jesus, nevertheless from the whole spirit of the teaching it is evident that Jesus bases the truth of his teaching not on miracles but on its own merits.

("If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.") But above all, the equality of men has been proclaimed by Christianity no longer as a deduction from man's relation to the Infinite, but as the fundamental teaching of the brotherhood of men, all men having been recognized as sons of God.

It would seem, therefore, to have been impossible to so distort Christianity as to destroy the consciousness of the equality of all men. But the human mind is ingenious, and it invented, perhaps unconsciously, or half consciously, a new method or *truc*,¹ as the French say, to render the Gospel warnings and the clear declaration of the equality of men ineffectual. This "dodge" consisted in attributing infallibility not only to certain words but also to a certain body of men called The Church, which has the right to transmit this infallibility to other men elected by it. A little addition to the Gospel was also invented,—that Christ when leaving for heaven transmitted to certain men the exclusive right not only of teaching others the divine truth (according to the

¹Trick, cunning, dodge.—TR.

letter of the Gospel, he transmitted also at the same time the power, not generally used, of being invulnerable to serpents, poisons, and fire), but also of making men saved or unsaved, and, above all, of transmitting this right to other men. And as soon as the idea of the Church was firmly established, then all the Gospel warnings for preventing the distortion of the religion became ineffectual. Reason was termed the source of error, and the Gospel was interpreted not as common sense demands, but as those who composed the Church desired.

And therefore all the three previous methods of distorting religions — Priesthood, Miracles, and the Infallibility of Writings — were also admitted into Christianity in their fullest power. The lawfulness of the existence of mediators between God and men was recognized, because the necessity and lawfulness of mediators was recognized by the Church; the reality of miracles was recognized because the Infallible Church witnessed to them; the Bible was recognized as sacred because the Church so recognized it.

And Christianity was distorted just as all the other religions were, but with this difference: that precisely because Christianity proclaimed with especial clearness its fundamental doctrine of the equality of men as the sons of God, it was necessary to distort the whole teaching with especial force in order to conceal this fundamental doctrine. And by the help of the idea of the Church, this was accomplished to an extent greater than in any other religion.

And as a result no religion ever proclaimed statements so obviously out of agreement with reason and contemporary human knowledge. Not to mention the absurdities of the Old Testament, such as the creation of light before the sun, the creation of the world six thousand years ago, the housing of all the species of animals in the ark, and various immoral abominations such as the direction to murder children and whole populations at the command of God; not to mention also that absurd sacrament, about which Vol-

taire even used to say that though many different religions had existed and still existed, never before had there been one the principal religious act of which consisted of eating one's God—to pass these things by, what can be more senseless than the assertions that the mother of God was both a mother and a virgin—that the sky opened and a voice was heard issuing from it—that Jesus flew away into the skies and is now sitting somewhere there on the right hand of the Father—or that God is One and Three, and not three Gods like Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, but One, and at the same time Three? And what can be more immoral than that awful theology according to which God is cruel and revengeful, punishes all men for the sin of Adam, and to save them sends His Son to the earth knowing beforehand that men will kill him and will be cursed for doing so; and that the salvation of men from sin consists in being christened, or in believing that all this is actually true, that the Son of God was killed by men for the salvation of men, and that those who do not believe this will be punished by God with eternal torments? So that leaving aside the additions, as some regard them, to the chief dogmas of this religion, such as the beliefs in the various relics and *ikons*, of the Virgin Mary, of petitionary prayers directed to various saints according to their specialities,—leaving aside also the Protestant doctrine of predestination,—the foundations of this religion, established by the Nicene Creed, and recognized by every one, are so absurd and immoral, and are developed to such a degree of contradiction to normal human feeling and reason, that men cannot believe them. Men may with their lips repeat certain words, but they cannot believe that which has no sense. One may say with one's lips: "I believe that the world was created six thousand years ago;" or, "I believe that Jesus flew away into the skies and is sitting on the right hand of the Father;" or, "God is One, and also Three;"—but no one can believe it, because the words have no sense. And therefore the men of our modern world who profess distorted Christianity, in reality believe in nothing.

And it is in this that the peculiarity of our time consists.

CHAPTER VII

IN our time men believe in nothing, and yet, owing to the false definition of faith which they have drawn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, incorrectly attributed to Paul, they imagine that they have a faith. Faith, according to this definition, is *ὑπόστασις* (the realization) of things hoped for, and *ἔλεγχος* (the certainty) of things not seen. But besides the impossibility of faith being the realization of things hoped for, faith being a mental state, and the realization of things hoped for an external event, — faith also is not the certainty of things unseen, for this certainty, as stated in the comment farther on, is founded on confidence in the witness of the truth, and confidence and faith are two different conceptions.

Faith is not hope, and not confidence, but a separate mental state. Faith is man's consciousness of a certain position in the world which imposes on him the obligation to fulfil certain actions. A man acts according to his faith, not, as it is said in the Catechism, because he believes in the Unseen as much as in the seen; and not because he hopes to receive his expectation; but only because having defined his position in the Universe he naturally acts in conformity with this position. So that an agriculturist cultivates the land, and a sailor undertakes a voyage, not because, as it is stated in the Catechism, they both believe in the Unseen, or hope to receive a reward for their action (this hope does exist, but it is not by it that they are directed), but because they regard this activity as their calling. So also the religious believer acts in a certain way, not because he believes in the Unseen, or expects a reward for his activity, but because, having understood his position in the Universe, he naturally acts in accordance with this position. If a man has defined his position in society as that of an unskilled or skilled laborer, or a government official, or a merchant, he regards it as necessary to

work, and as an unskilled or skilled laborer, an official, or a merchant, he does his work. So also in general a man who defines his position in the Universe in one way or another, inevitably and naturally acts in accordance with this definition (sometimes even not a definition but only a vague consciousness). Thus, for example, a man who has defined his position as that of a member of a people chosen by God, who, in order to profit by God's protection, must obey the commands of this God, will so live as to obey these commands; and a second man who has defined his position as that of one who has passed and is passing through various forms of existence and from whose actions depend whether his future will be better or worse, will also be guided in life by this definition of his; and the conduct of a third man, who has defined his position as that of an accidental combination of atoms in which consciousness has become kindled for a time, but which will eventually perish forever, — will differ from the two former men.

The conduct of these men will be quite different because they have defined their position differently; that is, they have a different faith. Faith is the same as religion, only with this difference, that by the word *religion* we imply a certain phenomenon externally observed, whereas by *faith* we mean the same thing experienced by man within himself. Faith is man's conception of his relation to the Infinite Universe,¹ and the direction of his activity resulting from that conception. And therefore true faith is never irrational, or in disagreement with existing knowledge, and its feature cannot be supernaturalism and senselessness, as is supposed and has been expressed by a Father of the Church, who said, "*Credo quia absurdum.*" On the contrary, the assertions of true faith, although they cannot be proved, not only never contain anything contrary to the reason and the knowledge of man, but always explain that which in life without these conceptions of true faith appears irrational and contradictory.

¹ The Russian word, translated here as "Infinite Universe," embraces the whole spiritual and material existence. — *Trans.*

Thus, for instance, the ancient Hebrew who believed in the existence of a Supreme, Eternal, Almighty Being, who created the Universe, the Earth, the Animals, Man, and so forth, and promised protection to His people if this people obeyed His law, — this man believed in nothing irrational or opposed to his knowledge, but on the contrary his faith explained to him many things in life which otherwise were inexplicable.

So also the Hindoo who believes that our souls have been in animals and that according to our good or bad life they will pass into higher or lower animals, explains to himself by this belief much which without it is incomprehensible.

So too with a man who regards life as an evil and the object of life as the attainment of peace by the annihilation of desires. He believes not in something irrational, but on the contrary in that which renders his life-conception more rational than it was without this belief.

So too with a true Christian, who believes that God is the spiritual father of all men and that man's highest welfare is attained when he recognizes his sonship to God and the brotherhood of all men.

All these beliefs, even though they may not be provable, are not irrational in themselves, but on the contrary supply a more rational meaning to the phenomena of life, which appear irrational and contradictory without them. And besides this all these beliefs defining the position of man in the universe necessarily demand certain actions corresponding to this position. And therefore if a religious teaching establishes senseless ideas which explain nothing, but only still more confuse the understanding of life, then this is not faith but a distortion of faith, which has already lost the features of true faith and which lays no obligations on men but rather becomes their tool.

One of the chief distinctions between true faith and its corruption, is that when it is corrupted man demands of God that in return for his sacrifices and prayers God should fulfil his desires, should be the servant of man. Whereas according to true faith man feels that God

demands of him, a man, the fulfilment of *His* will, demands that man should serve Him.

And it is just this faith which is not only lacking in the men of our times, — they even do not know what it is, and imply by faith either the repetition with the lips of whatever is taught them as the essence of faith, or else the fulfilment of rites which according to the teaching of Church-Christianity contribute to their obtaining what they desire.

CHAPTER VIII

MEN to-day are without faith. One set, the educated well-to-do minority, have freed themselves from the influence of the Church and believe in nothing, regarding all faiths either as absurdities or as useful tools for keeping the masses under their power. Whereas the great destitute uneducated majority who with some few exceptions do indeed believe, being under hypnotic influence, imagine that what is suggested to them as faith is faith, but in reality it is not faith, as it not only fails to explain to man his position in the Universe but still more confuses him.

From this situation and from the mutual relation between the unbelieving and simulating minority and the hypnotized majority, is composed the life of our so-called Christian world.

And this life, both of the minority which holds in its hands the means of hypnotism, as well as of the majority which is hypnotized, is terrible, both because of the cruelty and immorality of the rulers and of the crushed and stupefied state of the great working masses. Never at any period of religious decline did the indifference to and forgetfulness of the principal feature of all religions, and especially of the Christian one, — the equality of man, — attain the degree it has reached in our day.

Besides the complete absence of religion, the main reason of the awful modern cruelty of man to man is also due to that refined complexity of life which con-

ceals from men the effects of their actions. However cruel Attilas and Khenghiz Khans and their men may have been when they themselves killed face to face with their victims, the process of killing must have been much more unpleasant to them, and still more so the consequences of the killing, the cries of the relatives, the sight of the corpses; so that the consequences of their cruelty moderated it. But in our time we kill men through the medium of so complicated a transferring apparatus, and the consequences of our cruelty are so carefully removed and concealed from us, that there are no influences to moderate the cruelty, and the cruelty of one group of men toward others keeps increasing and increasing, and has at the present time attained limits which it never before reached.

If in our day any man — I do not say a Nero, a recognized villain, but any ordinary man — should wish to construct a pond of human blood for the purpose of enabling sick wealthy people under the advice of scientific medical men to bathe in, I think he would be able to arrange it without hindrance so long as he did so in the ordinary respectable way; that is, did not by force compel people to shed their blood, but placed them in a position where they could not live without shedding it; and, besides, if he invited the clergy, who would consecrate the new pond, just as they consecrate cannons, rifles, prisons, gallows, and men of science, who would invent the proofs of the necessity and lawfulness of such an institution, just as they have discovered the proofs of the necessity of wars and houses of ill-fame.

The essential principle of all religions, the equality of man, has been forgotten to such an extent, abandoned, and obstructed by various absurd dogmas, in the religion professed; whilst in science inequality in the form of the struggle of existence and the survival of the fittest has also been so completely recognized as the necessary phenomenon of life — that the destruction of millions of human lives for the convenience of those in power is regarded as a most ordinary and necessary phenomenon of life, and is continually being produced.

Men of our day cannot sufficiently plume themselves on those brilliant, unprecedented, colossal successes which have been won in the technical sphere during the nineteenth century.

There is no doubt that there has never been in history so great a material success—so great a control over the forces of nature—as that which has been attained in the nineteenth century. But there is also no doubt that never in history has there been such an example of immoral life, free from any forces that control the animal propensities of man,—as that lived by our Christian humanity, which is becoming more and more bestial.

The material success attained by the men of the nineteenth century is indeed great, but this success has been and is bought by an indifference to the most elementary demands of morality to which humanity has never before attained, even in the times of Khenghiz Khan, Attila, or Nero.

There is no dispute that ironclads, railways, book-printing, tunnels, photographs, Röntgen rays, and so forth, are all very fine. They are all very fine, but human lives are also fine, incomparably fine, as Ruskin used to say, those human lives which are pitilessly ruined by the million to purchase ironclads, railroads, tunnels, which not only do not adorn but disfigure life. To this it is generally replied that appliances are already being invented, and in the future will be invented still more, by means of which human lives will not be ruined as they are now;—but this is not true. If men do not regard themselves as all brothers, and human life is not considered the most sacred object, which not only cannot be violated, but the maintenance of which should be regarded as man's first and most urgent duty,—that is, if men do not regard each other religiously, they will always for their own personal advantages ruin each other's lives. Not even a fool will consent to spend thousands when he can attain the same end by spending a hundred, with the addition of a few human lives which are in his power. In

Chicago approximately the same number of men are killed by the railways every year. And the owners of the railways quite naturally do not adopt those appliances which would reduce the number, calculating that the annual payment to the injured or their families is less than the interest on the cost of the appliances.

It may well be that those who ruin human lives for their own advantages will be shamed by public opinion and compelled to adopt the necessary appliances; but if men are not religious and do their deeds to please men and not to please God, then, having adopted appliances to save human lives in one place, they will profit in some other way by human lives, as the most advantageous material for increasing their wealth.

It is easy to conquer nature, to construct railways, steamboats, museums, and so forth, if one is not sparing of human lives. The Egyptian kings were proud of their pyramids, and we admire them enthusiastically, forgetting those millions of lives of slaves which were destroyed during their construction. And so we admire also palaces, as we see them in exhibitions, our iron-clads, our transoceanic cables,—forgetting what we pay for all this. We might be proud of these things if it were all done voluntarily by free men, and not by slaves.

The Christian nations have conquered and subdued the American Indians, Hindoos, Africans, are now conquering and subduing the Chinese, and they are proud of this. But these conquests and subjugations occur not because Christian nations are spiritually superior to those conquered, but on the contrary because spiritually they are incomparably inferior. Leaving Hindoos and Chinese aside, even the Zulus had and have obligatory religious rules of some kind which imposed certain actions and forbade others; whereas our Christian nations have none. Rome conquered the whole world just when it had become free from every religion. This, only in a still stronger degree, is now also taking place with the Christian nations. They are all in the same condition of the absence of

religion, and therefore, notwithstanding their inner dissensions, they are all united as one federated band of robbers in which theft, loot, depravity, murder of individuals and masses are accomplished not only without the least tremor of conscience but with the greatest self-satisfaction, as in China the other day. Some believe in nothing, and are proud of it; others simulate belief in that which for their own advantage they instil into the people under the pretense of faith; others again — the great majority, the whole of the people — accept as faith that hypnotic suggestion to which they are subjected, and servilely submit to everything demanded of them by the ruling suggestors who themselves believe in nothing.

And these suggestors demand what was demanded by all the Neros who tried to fill up in some way their empty lives — the satisfaction of their insane luxury spreading out in all directions. And luxury is attained by naught else than the enslavement of man; the moment there is slavery luxury augments; the increase of luxury inevitably drags with it the increase of slavery, because only hungry, cold, want-driven people will all their lives do what is unnecessary for themselves but necessary for the amusement of their rulers.

CHAPTER IX

IN the sixth chapter of the Book of Genesis there is a passage of deep meaning, in which the author says that God, before the Flood, having seen that that Spirit of His which He gave to men for His service was only used by them for the service of their flesh, — was so angry with them that He regretted their creation, and before their entire destruction decided to shorten the life of men to a hundred and twenty years. It is just this which according to the Biblical narrative angered God and caused Him to shorten the life of man, which has now occurred with the men of our Christian world.

Reason is that power in men which defines their relation to the Universe; and as the relation of all men to the Universe is the same, the establishment of this relation, that is, religion, unites men. And the unity of men affords them the highest physical and spiritual welfare accessible to them.

Complete unity in the most perfect, lofty reason, and therefore complete welfare, is the ideal toward which humanity is striving; and every religion which answers the questions of the men of a given society both as to what is the Universe, and what they are in this Universe, unites men, and therefore brings them nearer to the realization of complete welfare. But when reason, abandoning its proper function of defining man's relation to God and his corresponding activities, is directed not only to the service of man's flesh, and not only to cruel strife with men and other beings, but also to the justification of their life, which is contrary both to the nature and the destiny of man, then occur those terrible calamities from which the majority of men are now suffering and those conditions which appear to preclude all possibility of a return to a rational and righteous life.

Heathens mutually united by the crudest religious teaching are much nearer the conception of the truth than the pseudo-Christian nations of our time, who live without religion, and amongst whom the foremost men are persuaded and teach to others that religion is not necessary, and that it is much better to live without any religion.

Amongst heathens there may be found men who, having become conscious of the contradictions between their faith and their increasing knowledge and the demands of their reason, will work out or assimilate a new religious teaching more in harmony with the new mental state of their nation, — a religion which will be accepted by their countrymen and fellow-believers. But the men of our world, some of whom regard religion as an instrument for subjugation, others as nonsense, and others again, — the great majority of the people, under the in-

fluence of a gross deceit, — believe they possess true religion, the men of our Christian world have become impenetrable to the influence of any progressive movement toward truth.

Proud of their improvements for the life of the body, and of their refined idle theories which not only justify their life, but also demonstrate their superiority to all nations of all past epochs, — they stagnate in their ignorance and immorality, in the full assurance that they stand on a height to which humanity had never before attained, and that each step on the road of ignorance and immorality lifts them up to a yet higher plane of enlightenment and progress.

CHAPTER X

It is natural to a man to establish conformity between his physical and his rational activities. A man can have no peace until he has established this conformity one way or another. But it can be established in two ways. One way is when a man is persuaded by his reason of the necessity or desirability of a certain action or actions, and then acts according to this decision. The other way is when a man acts under the influence of his feelings, and then invents a mental explanation or justification for his act.

The first method of conforming one's action with one's reason is natural to those who profess some kind of religion, and who know by its precepts what they should and what they should not do. The second method is natural chiefly to irreligious people, who do not possess any general principal for deciding the qualities of their actions, and who therefore always establish the harmony between reason and conduct, not by subordinating conduct to reason, but, after having acted under the influence of feeling, by using their reason to justify their action.

A religious man, knowing what is good or bad in his conduct, and that of other men, and why one thing is good and another bad, will, if he sees a contradiction

between the demand of his reason and his actions, or those of other men, use all the efforts of his reason to discover a way to destroy these contradictions; that is, to learn to harmonize his actions with the demands of his reason in the best way. Whereas an irreligious man, having no guide to decide the merits of his actions other than the pleasure they afford him, surrendering to the impulse of his numerous and often antagonistic feelings, involuntarily falls into contradiction; and having so fallen endeavors to solve or conceal it by arguments more or less complicated and ingenious, but always untruthful. And therefore, while the reasoning of religious people is always simple, uncomplicated, and truthful, the mental activity of irreligious people becomes especially subtle, complicated, and untruthful.

I will take the commonest example. A man is addicted to depravity; that is, is unchaste, unfaithful to his wife, or else lives immorally being unmarried. If he is a religious man he knows this is wrong, and the whole force of his reason is directed toward finding a way to free himself from his vice: avoiding association with adulterers, increasing his labors, arranging a rigorous life, not allowing himself to look on women as objects of lust, and so forth. And this is all very simple and can be understood by every one. But if the depraved man is irreligious, he immediately invents all sorts of reasons why it is very good to love women. And here begin all kinds of most intricate, cunning, and refined considerations, about the affinity of souls, about beauty, about free love, etc.,—which the more they are developed the more they obscure the question and conceal what is essential.

The same thing occurs with irreligious people in all spheres of action and thought. With the object of concealing their inherent contradictions, they accumulate all sorts of elaborate and specious arguments, which by filling their minds with unnecessary frivolities divert their attention from the important and essential, and give them the possibility of becoming hardened in that deceit in which the men of our world live without noticing it.

"Men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil," it is said in the Gospels. "For every one that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light lest his works should be reproved."

And therefore the men of our civilized world, having organized the most cruel, animal, immoral life, owing to the absence of religion, have also brought their involved, elaborate, useless mental activities, concealing the evil of this life, to that degree of unnecessary complication and intricacy that the majority have entirely lost all capacity of recognizing the distinction between good and evil, falsehood and truth.

To the men of our civilized world not one question exists which they can approach directly and simply: every question, economical, civic, political, diplomatic, scientific, to say nothing of philosophic and religious questions, are presented so falsely and artificially, and are therefore enveloped in so dense a shroud of intricate, unnecessary arguments, of elaborate distortions of ideas and words, of sophisms and disputations, that all discussions of such questions move in circles, and, like wheels without a connecting strap, which propel nothing, lead to no results, except the one object for which they were produced: the concealment from oneself and others of the evil in which men live and which they commit.

CHAPTER XI

IN all the spheres of the so-called science of to-day there is one feature which renders ineffective all the efforts directed to the investigation of the various departments of knowledge. This feature is that all the investigations of contemporary science avoid the essential problem to which an answer is required, and study secondary matters, the investigation of which leads to nothing and becomes the more confused the longer it is continued.

And indeed this cannot be otherwise with a science

which selects the objects of its investigations accidentally and not according to the demands of a religious conception of life, which would define what should be studied and why, what first and what after. Thus, for instance, in the at present fashionable sciences of sociology or political economy, one would think there could be but one question: What is the cause and purpose of some people doing nothing and others working for them? (If there is another question: Why people work separately, hindering each other, and not together, in common, which would be more advantageous?—this question is included in the other. If there were no inequality there would be no struggle.) One would imagine there was only this one question, but science does not even think of putting it and answering it, but instead it raises its own distant discussions and then leads them so that in no way can their deductions either solve or contribute to the solution of the fundamental question. Arguments are started about what was and is, and this past and present is considered as something as unalterable as the movements of the stars. Abstract theories are invented about values, capital, profit, interest,—and a complex mental play, a hundred years old, ensues between disputing men. Whereas in reality the question is solved very simple and easily.

The solution is in this: As all men are brothers and equal, each should act with others as he desires that others should act with him; and therefore the whole kernel of the matter lies in the destruction of the false religious law and the reestablishment of the true law. But the leaders of our Christian world not only decline to accept this solution,—on the contrary they endeavor to conceal the possibility of such a solution, and for this purpose lend themselves to those idle theorizings which they call science.

The same thing occurs in the sphere of jurisprudence. One would imagine that the one essential question is, Why do people exist who allow themselves to exercise violence toward other men, to rob, imprison, execute them, send them to wars, and much else? The solution

is very simple if the question is considered from the only standpoint which is adequate — the religious standpoint. From the religious point of view man cannot and should not exercise violence toward his neighbor; and therefore to solve the question one thing is necessary: to destroy all the superstitions and sophisms which admit violence, and to instil into men the religious principles which clearly exclude the possibility of violence.

But the leaders not only refrain from this, but use all their mental subtlety to hide from men the possibility and necessity of this solution. They write a mountain of books about various rights — civil, criminal, police, ecclesiastical, financial, and so forth, and dilate and dispute on these themes, quite persuaded that they are doing not only a useful but a very important work. As to the question why amongst men who are in essence equal, some judge, coerce, plunder, and execute others, — to this they not only give no answer, they do not even recognize its existence. According to their doctrine it appears that these acts of violence are accomplished, not by men, but by some sort of abstraction called The State.

In the same way the scientists of our day avoid and pass by in silence all the essential questions and hide the inner contradictions in all spheres of knowledge.

In the sphere of historical knowledge there is only one question — How the workers, that is, 999 thousandths of all mankind, lived? To this question there is not even the semblance of an answer. The question does not even exist, but mountains of books are written by historians of one class about the stomach-aches of Louis XI., about the villainies of Elizabeth of England and Ivan the Terrible, and who were their ministers, and what verses and comedies were composed by the *litterateurs* for the amusement of these kings and their mistresses and ministers; while the historians of another class write about the importance of the land in which the peoples lived, what they ate, what they traded in, and what clothes they wore, — in general about everything which had no influence on the life of the people but was the result of their religion, which is regarded by

the historians of this category as itself the result of the food and clothing used by the people.

And yet the answer to the question, how the workers formerly lived, can be given only by recognizing religion as the necessary condition of the life of the people. And therefore the answer is to be found in the study of the religions professed by the nations, which placed them in their several positions.

In the sphere of natural sciences one would think there was no particular necessity for obscuring the common sense of people, but here also, owing to the trend of thought which the science of our day has taken, instead of the most natural answers to the question, What is the description of this world of human beings, plants, and animals, and how is it subdivided? — only idle, obscure, and utterly useless chatter is circulated, chiefly directed against the Biblical story of the creation of the world, and about how organisms originated, which is really of no use to any one, and besides cannot be ascertained, as this origin, however we explain it, will always be concealed from us in the infinitude of time and space. And on these themes theories, refutations, and supplementary theories have been invented which form the subject of millions of books, and the unexpected deduction from which is only one: That the law of life to which man must submit is the struggle for existence. More than this, practical sciences like technology and medicine, in consequence of the absence of a leading religious principle, involuntarily diverge from a rational end and take a false direction. Thus all technology is directed, not to the end of alleviating the labor of the people, but to improvements necessary only for the wealthy classes, and which tend to separate still further the rich from the poor, the masters from the slaves. And if certain advantages from these inventions and improvements, some crumbs, fall to the lot of the masses, this is not at all because they have been apportioned, but only because they are of such a character that they cannot be kept back.

And so with medical science, which has in its false

direction reached that stage where it is accessible only to the wealthy classes, whereas the masses, owing to their mode of life and their poverty, and to the neglect of the chief problems of the amelioration of the life of the poor, can only profit by it in such proportions and under such conditions that its help only demonstrates more clearly the deviation of medical science from its proper end.

But these deviations from, and the distortion of, the essential problems is most astounding in what is called Philosophy. One would think there is one problem which philosophy ought to solve: What am I to do? And if in the philosophies of Christian nations the answers to this question have been unnecessarily associated with the greatest confusion, yet there were answers, in the teaching of Spinoza, of Kant in his "Kritik of Practical Reason," of Schopenhauer, and especially of Rousseau. But in later days, since the time of Hegel, who recognized everything that is as rational, the question "What am I to do?" recedes into the background, and philosophy directs the whole of its attention to the investigation of that which is, and to conforming it to a previously prepared theory. This is the first step in the descent. The next step, which reduces human thought yet lower, is the recognition of "struggle for existence" as the fundamental law, merely because this struggle is observable in animals and plants. According to this theory it is claimed that the destruction of the weaker is a law which should not be opposed. Finally comes the third step, the mischievous attempts at originality of a half-mad Nietzsche, which do not even represent anything whole and connected, — the random jottings of immoral thoughts founded on nothing, — but which are recognized by advanced people as the last word of philosophical science; and in answer to the question "What am I to do?" one is told directly, "Live for your own pleasure without attending to the life of others."

If any one were to doubt that terrible stupefaction and bestiality which has been attained by modern Chris-

tian humanity, then, leaving out of account the latest crimes, the Boer and Chinese wars, which are defended by the clergy and recognized as heroic feats by all in power, — this one extraordinary success of Nietzsche's writings may serve as an irrefutable proof. The disconnected writings of an agile but unintelligent and abnormal German, possessed of the mania of grandeur, appear, aiming at effect in the most trivial way. Neither in their ability nor their truth have these writings any real claim to the attention of the public. Such writings, not only in the time of Kant, Leibnitz, Hume, but even fifty years ago, would not only have failed to attract attention but could not even have appeared; whilst in our time, all so-called educated humanity is enchanted with the ravings of Mons. Nietzsche, refutes and interprets him, and his works are published in every language in innumerable copies.

Turgenieff has humorously said that reversed platitudes are often employed by incapable men to draw attention to themselves. For instance, every one knows that water is wet, but suddenly a man with a serious mien says that water is dry, alluding to ice, and such a statement, expressed with assurance, attracts attention.

Thus, also, the whole world knows that virtue consists in the subjugation of one's passions — in self-sacrifice. This is recognized not by Christianity alone, with which Nietzsche imagines he is fighting, — it is the eternal higher law which humanity has reached in Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, in the ancient Persian religion. And suddenly a man appears who declares that he has become persuaded that self-sacrifice, meekness, humility, love, are all vices which ruin mankind (he has in view Christianity, forgetting all other religions). One can understand that such an assertion staggers people at first. But having reflected a little and failed to find in the work any proof of this strange assertion, every rational man must thrust aside such a book, and only feel astonishment that in our time there is no absurdity too great to find a publisher. But with Nietzsche's books this is not the case. The majority of men, pseudo-

enlightened, examine the theory of the "Ober-Mensche" seriously, and consider its author a great philosopher, a successor to Descartes, Leibnitz, Kant.

And all this happens for this reason, that for the majority of the pseudo-enlightened men of our day the allusion to virtue and its principal basis, self-sacrifice, love, which restrain and condemn their animal life, is abhorrent, and it is pleasant to them to meet a doctrine of cruelty asserting the justice of establishing one's own happiness and greatness on the lives of the others on whom we feed, even though expressed haphazardly, illogically, disconnectedly.

CHAPTER XII

JESUS rebuked the Pharisees and Scribes for having taken the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and neither entered themselves nor allowed others to enter.

This is what is now being done by the scientific Scribes of to-day: these men have taken the keys, not of the Kingdom of Heaven, but of enlightenment, and neither enter themselves nor admit others. The augurs — the Priesthood — by the means of every kind of deceit and hypnotism have persuaded men that Christianity is not a doctrine which preaches the equality of all men and so destroys the entire modern heathen organization of life, but on the contrary that it supports it, and dictates to men that they must distinguish some from others, as stars are distinguished; that they must recognize that all power is from God, and willingly submit to it; and in general persuades the oppressed that their position is from God, and that they must bear it in meekness and humility, and submit to those oppressors who not only may not be meek and humble themselves, but must, while correcting others, teach and punish, — like Emperors, Kings, Popes, Bishops, and every class of secular and spiritual rulers, — living meanwhile in a splendor and luxury which it is the duty of their inferiors to supply. It is, thanks to this false teaching,

which they support energetically, that those in power rule the people and force them to serve their idleness, luxury, and vices.

And the only men who are emancipated from the Church-hypnotism, and who alone might save the people from their oppression, and who say they do desire this, — the scientists, — instead of doing the things which might accomplish what they desire, do exactly the contrary, and imagine that they are thus serving the people.

One might think that the most superficial observation of that which above all preoccupies those who keep the people under their power would enable these men of science to understand what force moves and restrains nations in a certain position, and that they ought to direct all their attention to this force. But they not only fail to do this, — they regard it as utterly useless.

These men appear not to wish to see this, and they carefully, and often sincerely, do for the people the most varied things, but do not do that one thing which before all is necessary to the people. Their activity resembles that of a man who might endeavor to move a train by muscular efforts, — he need only mount the tender and do what he continually sees the engine driver do — turn the handle which admits the steam into the cylinder. This steam is the religious life-conception of men. And scientists need only observe with what jealousy all rulers reserve to themselves this motive force, through which they rule the nations, in order to understand to what their energies should be directed if they would liberate the people from their slavery.

What does the Turkish Sultan defend, and to what does he hold most closely? And why does the Russian Emperor, arriving at any town, go to kiss the local relics and *ikons* before he does anything else? And why, notwithstanding all the varnish of culture with which he covers himself, does the German Emperor, in all his speeches appropriately or inappropriately allude to God, to Christ, to the sanctity of religion and the oath, etc? Why, because they all know that their power is based

on the army, and the army, the possibility of the existence of the army, is based only on religion. And if the wealthy are especially pious and pretend to be believers, go to church and keep the Sabbath day, they do all this chiefly because their instinct of self-preservation tells them that their exceptionally advantageous position in society is connected with the religion they profess.

These people often do not know in what way their power is founded on the religious deceit, but through the instinct of self-preservation they know where their weak point lies, upon which their position is dependent, and they protect this point before everything else. These men will always permit, and have permitted within certain limits, socialistic and even revolutionary propaganda, but the religious foundations they will never allow to be touched.

And therefore if the leaders of to-day, the Scientists, Liberals, Socialists, Revolutionists, Anarchists, cannot understand from psychology or history what it is which moves nations, they might at least through this obvious experience become convinced that the motive power lies, not in material conditions, but only in religion.

But, strange to say, the scientists, the leaders of to-day, whilst very excellently analyzing and understanding the conditions of the life of the nations, do not see what so obviously strikes one in the face. If those who act so leave the people in religious ignorance intentionally, in order to retain their advantageous position in the minority, this is a terrible, an infamous deceit. Those who so act are those very Pharisees whom more than any one else, whom even alone amongst all men, Jesus condemned — condemned because no monsters or miscreants have introduced and are introducing so much evil into the life of mankind as they.

If, on the other hand, these men are sincere, then the only explanation of this strange blindness is that, as the masses are under the hypnotism of false religion, so also these pseudo-enlightened people of to-day are under the hypnotism of false science, which has decided that the chief nerve by which humanity has always lived

and is living, is no longer necessary, and may be replaced by something else.

CHAPTER XIII

It is in this error or deceit of the Scribes — of educated men of our world — that the especial feature of our period consists, and in this lies the cause of the calamitous state in which Christian humanity is living, and of that animalism into which it is sinking deeper and deeper.

Generally, the leading educated men of to-day assert that those false religious beliefs which are held by the masses are of no special importance, and that it is not worth while to, nor is there any need of, contesting them directly, as Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, and others did. Science, in their opinion, that is, that disconnected casual information which they spread amongst the people, will attain this end by itself; that is, man, having learnt how many millions of miles the earth is from the sun, and what minerals the sun and stars contain, will cease to believe in ecclesiastical doctrines.

In this sincere or insincere assertion or assumption lies a great error or else a terrible piece of guile. From earliest childhood, the age most receptive of suggestion, at the very time when the educator cannot be too careful about what he transmits, senseless and immoral dogmas of so-called Christian religion, incompatible with reason or knowledge, are instilled into the child. He is taught the dogma of the Trinity, unacceptable to common sense, the descent of one of these three gods to earth to redeem the human race, his resurrection and ascension to heaven; he is taught to expect the second advent, and punishment with eternal torments for unbelief in these dogmas; he is taught to pray about his wants, and much else. And when all these conceptions, opposed both to reason and to modern knowledge, as well as to the human conscience, are ineffaceably printed on the receptive mind

of the child, he is left alone to discriminate as he can among all those contradictions which follow from the dogmas he has accepted and assimilated as the very truth. No one tells him how he can and should reconcile these contradictions, and if theologians endeavor to reconcile them, their efforts only still further confuse the matter. And so by degrees the man becomes accustomed (and in this the theologians vigorously support him) to the idea that one cannot trust in reason and that therefore everything is possible in the world, and that in man there is nothing by the aid of which he can distinguish for himself good from evil and falsehood from truth; and that in what is most important for him—his conduct—he must be guided, not by his reason, but by what other men tell him. One can understand what a terrible distortion must be produced in the spiritual part of man by such an education, maintained in maturity by all the means of hypnotic suggestion which are continually being applied to the people by the aid of the priesthood.

And if a man of strong spirit with great difficulty and sufferings frees himself from the hypnotic influence in which he was educated in childhood and confirmed in maturity, then the distortion of his mind produced by the persuasion that he must not trust his reason, cannot pass away without leaving traces, just as in the physical world the infection of an organism with a powerful poison cannot pass without traces. Having freed himself from the hypnotism of this deceit, such a man, hating the lie from which he has just escaped, will naturally adopt that theory of the leaders in which all religion is regarded as one of the principal obstacles to the advance of humanity along the way of progress. And having adopted this view, such a man will become, like his teachers, an unprincipled man; that is, without conscience, guided in life only by his lusts, and far from condemning himself for this, will regard himself as on the highest plane of mental development accessible to humanity.

So it will be with the strong man. Whereas the

weaker ones, although they may awake to doubt, will never altogether liberate themselves from that deceit in which they were educated, and accepting and inventing various ingeniously woven cloudy theories intended to justify the senselessness of the accepted dogmas, living in a region of doubts, mists, sophisms, and self-deceit, will only contribute to the blinding of the masses and to hindering their awakening.

And the masses, possessing neither the power nor the possibility of struggling with the hypnotic influence they are subjected to, will live and die, generation after generation, as they do now, bereft of the highest human welfare, — of a true religious understanding of life, — and will always be a passive tool in the hands of the classes which rule and deceive them.

And it is this terrible deceit that the scientific leading men say is not important and is not worth while fighting! The only explanation of such an assertion, if those who make it are sincere, is, that they are themselves under the hypnotism of false science. And, if they are not sincere, is, that to attack established beliefs is disadvantageous and often dangerous. One way or the other, at all events, the assertion that the profession of a false religion is harmless or merely unimportant, and that therefore one can spread enlightenment without destroying the religious deceit, is utterly untrue.

The salvation of mankind from their calamities lies only in their emancipation from that hypnotic influence in which they are held by their priests, as well as from that into which they are led by the scientists. Before one can pour anything into a vessel one must first empty it of what it already contains. So also it is necessary to free men from the deceit in which they are held in order that they may accept true religion, that is, a true relation to the source of all, — God, — corresponding to the development of humanity, and a guide for their actions deduced from this relation.

CHAPTER XIV

"BUT does a true religion really exist? All religions are infinitely different, and one has no right to call any particular religion the true one merely because it corresponds most nearly to our tastes," those will say who examine religions in their externalities as some sort of disease, from which they feel themselves free, but from which others are still suffering. But this is untrue: Religions are different in their external forms, but they are all the same in their fundamental principles. And it is just these fundamental principles of all religions which represent that true religion which alone to-day is natural to all men, and the acceptance of which can alone save men from their calamities.

Humanity has existed for a long period, and just as it has from generation to generation elaborated its practical acquisitions, so also it could not help elaborating those spiritual principles which have formed the basis of its life, and the rules of conduct which follow from these principles. That blind men do not see them is no proof that they do not exist.

Such a modern religion, common to all men,—not some one particular religion with all its peculiarities and distortions, but a religion consisting of those principles which are the same in all the religions obtaining among men and known to us, professed by more than nine-tenths of the human race,—such a universal religion does exist, and men have not yet become finally brutalized only because the best men of all nations adhere to this religion and profess it, even though unconsciously, and it is only the inculcation of deceit which is practised on men by the aid of the priests and the scientists which hinders them from accepting it consciously.

The principles of this true religion are so natural to men that the moment they are communicated they are accepted as something long familiar and self-evident. For us this true religion is Christianity, in those of its

principles in which it coincides, not with the external forms, but with the fundamental principles of Brahmanism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Buddhism, even Mohammedanism. In the same way, for those who profess Brahmanism, Confucianism, and so on, the true religion will be the one the fundamental principles of which coincide with those of all the other great religions. And these principles are very simple, comprehensible, and not numerous.

They assert that there is a God, the source of all; that in man there is a particle of this divine element which he can either diminish or increase by his life; that to increase this element man must suppress his passions and increase love in himself; and that the practical means to attain this is to act with others as one wishes others to act toward oneself. All these principles are common to Brahmanism and Judaism and Confucianism and Taoism and Buddhism and Christianity and Mohammedanism. (If Buddhism gives no definition of God it nevertheless recognizes that with which man unites and into which he is immersed when he reaches Nirvana. So that what man is united with when immersed in Nirvana is the same essence which is recognized as God in Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedanism.)

"But this is not religion," the men of our times who are accustomed to accept what is supernatural, that is, senseless, as the chief feature of religion, will say; "this is anything you may like: philosophy, ethics, reason, but not religion." Religion, according to their conception, must be senseless and incomprehensible (*credo quia absurdum*). And yet it was only out of these very principles, or rather out of their being taught as religious doctrine, that by a long process of distortion all the absurdities about miracles and supernatural events which are regarded as the fundamental features of religion were elaborated. To assert that the supernatural and irrational elements represent the essential features of religion, is like a man, while looking only at rotten apples, asserting that a repulsive

flavor and a pernicious effect on the digestion are the essential qualities of the apple as a fruit.

Religion must define the relation of man to the source of all, the destiny of man which follows from this relation, and the rules of conduct from this destiny. And the universal religion, the fundamental principles of which are identical in all faiths, entirely satisfies these demands. It defines the relation of man to God as that of a part to the whole; it deduces from this relation the function of man as the increase in himself of the divine element; and from this function it deduces practical rules from the principle of acting toward others as one wishes others to act toward oneself.

People often doubt, and I have myself at one time doubted, that such an abstract rule as the one that we should act toward others as we desire others to act toward oneself could be as obligatory a rule and guide in one's conduct as the more simple rules about fasting, prayer, communion, etc. But this doubt is irrefutably answered, if by nothing else, by the spiritual condition of the Russian peasant, who will rather die than spit the sacrament into the dust, although in obedience to the commands of men he is ready to kill his brothers.

Why should not the demands deduced from the rule of acting toward others as one wishes them to act toward oneself, — not to kill one's brothers, not to abuse men, not to commit adultery, not to revenge, not to profit by the need of one's brothers to satisfy one's fancies, and so on, — why should not these demands be instilled with the same strenuousness and become as obligatory and untransgressible as faith in the sanctity of the sacrament, *ikons*, and so on, for those whose faith is founded more on confidence than on a clear inner consciousness?

CHAPTER XV

THE truths of the universal religion of to-day are so simple, comprehensible, and near to the heart of every one that it would seem sufficient for all parents,

rulers, and teachers — instead of the outlived and senseless doctrines of Trinities, virgin mothers, redemptions, Indras and Trimourthis, of Buddhas flying away into the skies, of Mohammeds, in which they often do not themselves believe — to instil into children and adults those clear, simple truths of the religion common to all men, the metaphysical essence of which is that the Spirit of God lives in man, and the practical rule of which is that man should act toward others as he wishes others to act toward himself, — for the whole life of mankind to change of itself.

If instead of the faith that children are now taught and adults are confirmed in, that God sent His Son to redeem the sins of Adam, and to establish His Church which must be obeyed, and the consequent rule that one should pray and bring offerings at certain times and at certain places, and refrain from a given food at a given time and on certain days from work, — if instead of this they were taught and confirmed in the faith that God is a Spirit whose image lives in us, the power of which we can increase by our conduct; — if only they were taught this and all that naturally follows from these principles, in the same way that they are taught at present those unnecessary legends, about impossible events and the rules of the senseless rituals which follow from such tales, — then, instead of irrational strife and separation, very soon, without the help of diplomatists, international law, peace congresses, political economists, and socialists of all sections, a peaceful, friendly, happy life would come about for humanity, directed by this sole religion.

But nothing of the sort is attempted: not only is the deceit of false religion not destroyed and the true religion not preached, but on the contrary more and more men farther and farther recede from the possibility of accepting the truth.

The chief reason why people do not do what is so natural, necessary, and possible, is that men of to-day, owing to a prolonged irreligious life, have become so accustomed to organize and establish their mode of liv-

ing by violence, — bayonets, bullets, prisons, gallows, — that they imagine such an order of life is not only normal, but that no other is possible. Not only those to whom the existing order is advantageous think this, even those who suffer from it are so stupefied by the hypnotic influence practised upon them that they also regard violence as the only means of securing good order in human society. And yet more than anything else this organization and establishment of social life by violence removes men from the possibility of understanding the causes of their sufferings, and therefore from the possibility of true order; — like an incapable or ill-intentioned doctor when he drives inward a virulent eruption, thus not only deceiving the patient by his action, but increasing the disease itself and rendering a cure impossible.

To the rulers who have enslaved the masses and who think and say “After us, the Deluge,” it appears very convenient, by the means of the army, the clergy, the police, and of the threats of bayonets, bullets, prisons, workhouses, gallows, to compel the enslaved people to continue to live in their stupefaction and slavery, and not to hinder the rulers from enjoying their position. And the rulers do this, and call it “right order,” whereas nothing hinders true social order so much as this. In reality such an organization is not only not right order, but an organization of evil.

If the men of our world with the remnants of religious principles which still exist in the masses, had not continually before their eyes the crimes of those who had taken upon themselves the duty of conserving social order and social morality, — by wars, executions, prisons, taxation, the sale of intoxicants and opium, — they would never have dreamed of carrying out one hundredth part of those evil deeds, deceits, acts of violence, murders, which they now carry out in the full persuasion that such deeds are good and natural.

The law of human life is of such a nature that the improvement of life, of the individual as well of society, is possible only by inward moral perfecting. Whereas

all the efforts of men to improve their life by external influence and coercion serve as the most effective propaganda and example of evil, and therefore fail not only to improve life, but on the contrary increase the evil, which, like a snowball, continually grows larger and larger, and more and more removes people from the only possibility of truly improving their life.

In proportion as the habit of violence and crimes practised under the guise of law by the custodians of order and morality themselves becomes more and more frequent and cruel, and is justified in greater measure by the inculcation of falsehood uttered as religion, people become more and more firmly established in the idea that the law of their life is not love and mutual service, but struggle and the devouring of each other.

And the more they become confirmed in this idea, which lowers them to the plane of animals, the more difficult is it for them to awaken from that hypnotic influence to which they are subjected, and to accept as the basis of life that true religion of our time common to all humanity.

A vicious circle is established. The absence of religion renders an animal life founded on violence possible, and this animal life founded on violence renders more and more impossible liberation from the hypnotic influence and the assimilation of true religion. And this is why people do not do what is natural, possible, and necessary in our time: do not destroy the deceit of the semblance of religion and do not accept and preach the true religion.

CHAPTER XVI

Is any issue out of this enchanted circle possible, and where is it?

It seems at first that the Governments, having taken upon themselves the duty of guiding the life of nations for the welfare of the nations, ought to lead men out of the circle. So those who have endeavored to replace the

order of life founded on violence by a rational one founded on mutual service and love have always thought. So also thought Christian reformers, as well as the founders of the various theories of European Communism, and so also thought the famous Chinese reformer, Mi-Ti, who proposed to the Government to teach children in the schools not military sciences and exercises, and to give rewards to adults not for military exploits, but to teach children and adults the rules of respect and love, and to distribute prizes and encouragements for exploits of love.

And thus also many Russian religious reformers from the people have thought, whom I have known and of whom I now know many, from Sutaief to the old man who has already submitted a petition to the Emperor five times, begging him to command the canceling of the false religion and the preaching of true Christianity.

People naturally think that Governments who justify their existence by their care of national welfare must, in order to insure this welfare, desire to use that sole means which cannot in any way harm the people, but only produce the most fruitful results. But Governments have not only never and nowhere taken this duty upon themselves, but on the contrary have always and everywhere defended with the greatest jealousy the existing false and outlived religious teaching, and persecuted by every means those who have attempted to transmit to the people the foundations of true religion. And indeed it cannot be otherwise: for Governments to reveal the falsehood of the existing religion and to preach the true one would be like a man chopping the branch on which he is sitting.

But if Governments do not do this, it would seem that it certainly ought to be done by those men of science who, having freed themselves from the deceit of false religion, desire as they say to serve the people who have reared them. But these men, like the Governments, do not do this. Firstly, because they regard it as inexpedient to subject themselves to the unpleasant-

nesses and dangers of persecutions by the Governments for revealing the deceit upheld by the Governments, and which, according to the conviction of these men, will disappear of itself; secondly, because, regarding all religions as outlived errors, they have nothing to offer the people in the place of the deceit which they might overthrow.

There remain those great masses of unlearned people under the hypnotic influence of the Church and Government deceit, and who therefore regard the semblance of religion instilled into them as the only true religion, believing that there is not and cannot be any other. These masses are under the continual strenuous influence of hypnotism; generation after generation is born, lives, and dies in that stupefied state in which it is held by the priesthood and Government; and if any become freed from it, they inevitably drop into the scientific school, which denies religion, and their influence becomes as useless and harmful as the influence of their teachers.

So that for some it is disadvantageous, for others it is impossible.

CHAPTER XVII

It looks as if there were no issue.

And indeed for irreligious people there is and can be no issue from this position; people who belong to the higher ruling classes, even if they pretend that they are anxious about the welfare of the masses, will never (nor can they, being guided by worldly motives) seriously destroy that stupefaction and enslavement in which these masses live, and which give the higher classes the possibility of ruling over them. In the same way those also who belong to the enslaved, in like manner being guided by worldly motives, cannot desire to render worse their at present difficult position by struggling with the higher classes for the purpose of revealing the false teaching and preaching the true.

Neither have they any reason for doing so, and if they are intelligent men they never will do it.

But this is not so with religious people—those who, however depraved society may be, always by their lives preserve that sacred fire of religion without which human life could not exist. There are times (such is the present one) when these men are not seen, when, despised and humiliated by every one, they pass their lives obscurely, as with us in Russia, in exile, prisons, penal battalions,—but they exist, and on them depends the rational life of mankind. And it is these religious people, however few they may be, who alone can and will sever that enchanted circle in which men are riveted. These men can do this because all those disadvantages and dangers which prevent the worldly man from opposing the existing order of life, not only do not exist for the religious man, but increase his zeal in the struggle with falsehood, and in the profession by word and deed of that which he regards as divine truth. If he belongs to the ruling classes, he will not only not desire to conceal the truth out of regard to his advantageous position, but, on the contrary, having come to abhor these advantages, he will use all the powers of his soul to free himself from these advantages and to preach the truth, as he will no longer have any other object in life than that of serving God. If, on the other hand, he belongs to the enslaved, then, having likewise abandoned the desire common to people of his position, of bettering the conditions of his physical life, such a man will have no other object than the fulfilment of the will of God by revealing falsehood and professing the truth, and no sufferings or threats will any longer compel him to cease to live in accordance with that sole meaning which he has recognized in his life. Both the one and the other will act thus as naturally as the worldly man labors and undergoes privations for the possession of riches and for satisfying the ruler from whom he expects

advantages. Every religious man acts thus because the human soul enlightened by religion no longer lives merely by the life of this world as irreligious people live, but lives by the eternal, infinite life, for which sufferings and death in this life are as insignificant as the corns on his hand and the fatigue of his limbs are insignificant to a laborer plowing a field.

It is these people who will sever the enchanted circle in which men are now riveted. However few they may be, however low their social position, however weak they may be in education and intellect, these men, as surely as fire ignites the dry prairie, will ignite the whole world,—all the hearts of men dried up from a long period of irreligious life and thirsting for renovation.

Religion is not a faith established once for all in supernatural events, supposed to have taken place at some time or other, or in the necessity of certain prayers and rites; neither is it, as the scientists think, the remains of the superstitions of ancient unenlightenment which in our time have no significance or adaptation to life: Religion is the relation of man to eternal life, to God, in accordance with reason and contemporary knowledge, which alone moves man forward toward the end for which he is intended.

“The human soul is a lamp of God,” says a wise Hebrew proverb. Man is a weak, miserable animal until in his soul there burns the fire of God. But when this fire kindles (and it kindles only in a soul illumined by religion) man becomes the most powerful being in the world. And this cannot be otherwise, because then it is no longer *his* power which works in him, but the power of God.

So this is what religion is, and in what its essence consists.

ON RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

(January 10, 1902)

I

IN Russia there are missionaries whose duty it is to convert into orthodoxy all who are not orthodox. At the end of 1901 a congress of such missionaries assembled in the town of Orel. Toward the close the *Maréchal de la Noblesse* of the district, Mr. Stakhovitch, uttered a speech in which he proposed that the Congress should recognize the complete liberty of conscience; implying by that term, as he expressed it, "not only liberty of belief, but also liberty of external manifestation, which includes the liberty of falling away from orthodoxy, and even of seducing others into heterodoxy." Mr. Stakhovitch considered that such liberty would only contribute to the triumph and spread of the orthodoxy in which he professed himself a believer.

The members of the Congress did not agree with Mr. Stakhovitch's proposal, and did not even discuss it. Later on an animated discussion and controversy ensued in the newspapers and periodicals as to whether the Orthodox Church should or should not be tolerant. Some — the majority of both the orthodox clergy and the laity — were opposed to tolerance, and recognized for one reason or another the impossibility of abandoning the persecution of the seceding members of the Church. Others — the minority — agreed with Stakhovitch's opinion, approved of him, and demonstrated the desirability and even the necessity for the Church itself of recognizing liberty of conscience.

Those who disagreed with Mr. Stakhovitch claimed

that the Church which gives men eternal welfare cannot but use all the measures at its disposal to save its feeble-minded members from eternal perdition, and that one of these measures is the establishment by the authorities of obstacles to secession from the true Church and to seduction of its members. But above all, they said, the Church which has received from God the power of binding and unbinding always knows what it is about when it employs violence against its enemies; whilst the reasoning of laymen about the justice or injustice of clerical action only demonstrates the error of worldly men in permitting themselves to condemn the actions of the Infallible Church.

Thus said, and are saying, the opponents of religious tolerance; whereas its advocates assert that it is unjust to oppose by force the profession of faiths in disagreement with orthodoxy, and that the distinctions drawn by the opponents of religious tolerance between belief and its external expression have no foundation, as every belief must inevitably be expressed in external actions.

Besides this, said they, for the true Church, which has for its source Christ and his promise that "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it," there can be no danger from the preaching of a small number of heretics or seceders; and the more so that persecutions themselves do not attain their object, as martyrdom only weakens the moral authority of the persecuting Church and increases the strength of the persecuted.

II

THE supporters of religious tolerance say that the Church should in no cases use violence against its dissenting members and the professors of other faiths. The Church should not use violence! But here the question involuntarily suggests itself: How can the Church use violence?

"*The Christian Church*," according to the definition it assumes itself, "*is a society of men established by God*

and having for its object the transmission to mankind of the true faith which saves them both in this world and in the world to come."

How, then, can such a society of men, possessing as its instruments grace and doctrine, desire to and actually commit violence toward those who do not acknowledge its tenets?

To advise the Church not to persecute seceders or those who seduce its members is exactly like recommending an academy of scientists not to have recourse to persecutions, exiles, executions, and so on, of those who disagree with its opinions. An academy of scientists *cannot* desire to do so, and even if it did it could not do these things, as it does not possess the necessary instruments. So also with the Church. The Christian Church, according to its very definition, *cannot* desire to use violence against those who disagree with it, and even if it did so desire, it cannot commit the violence, as it does not possess the necessary instruments. What is the significance, then, of those persecutions which have been committed by the Christian Church since the time of Constantine, which continue yet, and which the supporters of religious tolerance advise the Church to abandon?

III

MR. STAKHOVITCH, citing in his speech the words of Guizot about the necessity of freedom of conscience in religious teaching, quotes after these good and clear words the bad and confused words of Aksakoff, who substitutes the idea of *Church* for the idea of *Christian Religion*, and having committed this substitution, endeavors to prove the possibility and necessity of tolerance in the Church. But the Christian Religion and the Christian Church are not the same, and we have no right to suppose that what is natural to the Christian Religion is also natural to the Christian Church.

The Christian Religion is the highest consciousness of man of his relation to God to which humanity has

attained, ascending from the lowest to the highest step of religious consciousness. And therefore the Christian Religion, and all men professing the true Christian Religion, knowing that man has attained to a certain degree of clearness and height of religious consciousness, thanks only to the unceasing progress of mankind from darkness to light, cannot be intolerant. Acknowledging themselves in possession only of a certain degree of truth, which continually more and more clarifies itself, rising by the common efforts of humanity, — the professors of the true Christian Religion when meeting beliefs new to them and disagreeing with their own, not only refrain from condemning and rejecting such faiths, but gladly greet, study, reëxamine, according to them their own belief, reject what disagrees with reason, accept what clarifies and elevates the truth they profess, and are still more confirmed in what is common to all faiths.

Such is the nature of the Christian Religion in general, and thus act those who profess true Christianity. But not so with the Church. The Church, recognizing itself as the only keeper of the full, divine, eternal, forever unchangeable truth disclosed to men by God Himself, cannot but regard every declaration of religious teaching expressed otherwise than in its own dogmas as a lying, pernicious teaching (even intentionally evil when it proceeds from those who know the tenets of the Church) which draws men into eternal perdition. And therefore, according to its own definition, the Church cannot be tolerant and cannot refrain from using against all expressions and all preachers of faiths which disagree with itself all those means which it regards as in line with its position. So that the Christian Religion and the Christian Church are completely different conceptions. It is true that every Church asserts that it is the only representative of Christianity; but the Christian Religion, that is, the profession of the free Christian Religion, by no means admits that the Church is the representative of Christianity. Adherents to the Christian Religion even cannot do so, as there are many Churches, and each one regards itself as the only vessel

of the complete Divine Truth. It is this confusion of the two different conceptions, continually employed for various purposes by Churchmen, which accounts for the fact that all their arguments about the desirability of tolerance for the Church suffer from a common vagueness, pomposity, incompleteness, and entire want of persuasiveness.

Such are all the arguments about this subject in our country of the Homiakoffs, Samarins, Aksakoffs, and others, and from this same feature does Mr. Stakhovitch's speech suffer. It is all not only empty but also harmful gossip, again blowing incense smoke into the eyes of those who have just begun to free themselves from the deceit.

IV

So that the answer to the question : How the Church which defines itself as a society of men having for their object the preaching of the truth, and which has not and cannot have any instruments of violence, can use violence against the faiths which disagree with itself ? is simply this : That the institution which calls itself the Christian Church is not a Christian institution, but a secular one ; an organization disagreeing with Christianity, and, if anything, inimical to it.

When this thought came to me for the first time I did not believe it (so firmly, from childhood, is the reverence toward the sanctity of the Church instilled into all of us). I at first thought that this was a paradox, that in such a definition of the Church there was some mistake. But the more I examined this question from different sides the more certain it became to me that the definition of the Church as an organization not Christian but inimical to Christianity is an entirely exact definition, without which it is impossible to explain to oneself all those contradictions which are included in the past and present activities of the Church.

And, really, what is the Church ? The communicants say that it is a society established by Christ, to which

has been confided the exclusive guardianship and interpretation of the indubitable Divine Truth, guaranteed by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the members of Church; and that this witness of the Holy Ghost is transferred from generation to generation by the laying on of hands established by Christ.

But one need only carefully examine the data by which this is proved to become convinced that all these assertions are quite arbitrary.

Those two texts (in those writings which the Church regards as sacred), upon which rest the proofs of the establishment of the Church by Christ Himself, have not at all the meaning attributed to them. And by no means can they signify the establishment of the Church, as the very idea of "the Church" at the time of the writing of the Gospels, and still more at the time of Christ, did not even exist.

The third text upon which the exclusive right of the Church to teach divine truth is apt to be founded — the concluding verses of Mark and Matthew — are recognized as forgeries by all the experts of the Gospel manuscripts.

Even less can it be proved that the descent of the fiery tongues on the heads of the disciples, seen only by the disciples, demonstrates that all which was to be said, not only by these disciples, but also by all on whom they were to lay their hands, is said by God (that is, by the Holy Ghost), and therefore is an eternally unquestionable truth.

But, above all, even if this were proved (which is quite impossible), even then there is no possibility of proving that this gift of infallibility exists precisely in that Church which asserts it of itself. The chief and insoluble difficulty is that the Church is not One, and that every Church asserts that It alone is in the truth and all the others in error. So that, as a matter of fact, the assertion of each Church that it alone is in the truth has exactly as much weight as the assertion of any man who swears, "By God, I am right, and all who disagree with me are wrong."

"By God, we alone compose the true Church" — in this, and this alone, consists all the proof of the infallibility of any Church. Such a basis, while being both very unstable and false, has besides this defect, that, excluding all verification of anything preached by a Church claiming infallibility for itself, it opens a limitless field for every kind of the strangest fantasies taught as the truth. And when irrational and fantastic assertions are taught as the truth, then there naturally appear men who protest against such assertions. And in order to compel people to believe in irrational and fantastic assertions there is but one means — coercion.

The whole of the Nicene Creed is a network of irrational and fantastic assertions which could arise only amongst men who recognized themselves as infallible, and could spread only by compulsion.

"God the Father gave birth before Time to God the Son, from whom all emanated. This Son was sent into the world for the salvation of men, and there he was again born from a virgin, and was crucified, and arose, and ascended into heaven, where he is now sitting on the right hand of the Father. And at the end of the world this Son will come to judge the living and the dead;" — and all this is an indisputable truth revealed by God Himself!

If we in the twentieth century cannot accept all these dogmas, contrary both to common sense and human knowledge, so also in the time of the Nicene Creed people were not deprived of common sense and could not agree with all these strange dogmas; and they expressed their disagreement with them. And the Church, regarding itself in the sole possession of the full truth, could not admit this disagreement, and naturally used the most peremptory means against this denial and its diffusion — coercion. Admitting the use of violence in certain cases, as, for instance, in war and punishments, the Church naturally regarded as even more permissible and lawful the use of violence against

men who by their false teaching thrust others into eternal perdition.

The Church, united to power, has always used violence — concealed violence, but nevertheless most decided and effective. It gathered taxes from every one by violence without inquiring whether they agreed or not with the established faith, but demanding of all its profession.

Having this money collected by coercion it organized with it a most powerful instrument of hypnotism for the purpose of establishing amongst children and adults its own faith alone. And when this instrument was not sufficient it used its power to coerce directly. So that in a Church supported by the State there can be no mention of religious tolerance.

And this cannot be otherwise while Churches are Churches.

It will be said that Churches like the Quakers, Wesleyans, Shakers, Mormons, and at the present time especially Roman Catholics, collect money from their members without using the power of coercion, and therefore do not use violence to support themselves. But this is incorrect: the money collected by wealthy people, and especially by Roman Catholic congregations during ages of paid hypnotism, are not free gifts of their members, but result from coercion in its crudest form. Money is always collected by the aid of coercion and is always the tool of coercion. Before a Church can regard itself as tolerant it must be free from all monetary influence. "Freely ye have received, freely give."

V

THE Church, as a matter of fact, does *not* possess instruments of violence. Violence, if it is used, is used not by the Church itself, but by the power with which the Church is united. And therefore the question arises: Why do the Governments and ruling

classes support the Church? It would seem that the beliefs preached by the Church ought to be indifferent to the Governments and the ruling classes. It would seem that it ought to be just the same to the Governments and ruling classes whatever the peoples they govern believe: whether they are Protestants, Catholics, Greek-Orthodox, Mohammedan. But this is not so. In all times religious beliefs correspond to the social organization; that is, social organization develops according to religious beliefs. And therefore: As the religious belief of the peoples, so is the social organization. This the Governments and ruling classes know, and therefore they always support that religious teaching which corresponds to their advantageous position. The Governments and ruling classes know that the true Christian religion repudiates power founded on violence, repudiates the distinction of classes, the accumulation of riches, executions, wars — all by which the Governments and ruling classes occupy their advantageous position. Therefore they find it necessary to support that faith which justifies their position. And Christianity, perverted by the Churches, does this, and in addition affords the advantage that, having perverted *true* Christianity, it conceals from men the approach to it.

The Governments and ruling classes could not exist without the perversion of Christianity, which is called the Church Faith. The Church with its deceit could not exist without the help of direct or indirect coercion on the part of the Governments and the ruling classes. In some states this coercion shows itself in persecutions, in others in the exclusive patronage by the wealthy ruling classes. And the possession of riches is possible only by violence. And therefore the Church and the Governments and the ruling classes mutually uphold each other. So that the opponents of religious tolerance are quite right in defending violence and persecution, upon which depends the existence of the Church. While the advocates of tolerance would be right only if they applied not to the Church but to the

State, and demanded what is incorrectly termed *the separation of Church from State*, but which in reality is only the cessation of the exclusive Governmental support by direct violence or indirectly by subsidizing any one particular faith.

But to demand from the Church that it should abandon coercion in any form whatever is like demanding of a foe besieged on all sides that he should disarm and give himself up into the hands of his enemies.

Only true, free Christianity, untrammelled by any worldly institutions, and therefore afraid of nothing and no one, and having for its aim only the greater and greater knowledge of the divine truth and its greater and greater realization in life, can be tolerant.

“NOTES FOR OFFICERS”

(December 20, 1901)

“It is impossible but that offenses will come, but woe unto him through whom they come.” — LUKE xvii. 1, 2.

IN all Russian barracks there hang, nailed to the wall, the so-called “Notes for Soldiers”¹ composed by General Dragomiroff. These notes are a collection of stupidly braggart sentences intermixed with blasphemous citations from the Gospels, and written in an artificial barrack slang, which is, in reality, quite strange to every soldier. The Gospel citations are quoted in order to corroborate the statements that soldiers should kill and tear with their teeth the enemy: “If your bayonet breaks, strike with your fists; if your fists give way, bite with your teeth.” The notes conclude with the statement that God is the soldiers’ General: “God is your General.”

Nothing illustrates more convincingly than these notes that terrible degree of unenlightenment, servile submissiveness, and brutality which Russian men have attained to at present. Since this most horrible blasphemy appeared and was first hung up in all the barracks (a considerable time ago), not one commander, nor priest — whom this distortion of the meaning of the Gospel texts would seem to concern directly — has expressed any condemnation of this obnoxious work, and it continues to be published in millions of copies and to be read by millions of soldiers who accept this dreadful production as a guide to their conduct.

These notes revolted me long ago, and now, being

¹ “Notes for Soldiers” (*Soldatskaya Pamiatka*), by General Dragomiroff, 19th ed. See p. 73. — EDS.

afraid I may otherwise miss the opportunity of doing so before my death, I have now written an appeal to soldiers,¹ in which I have endeavored to remind them that as men and Christians they have quite other duties toward God than those put forward in the notes. And a similar reminder is required, I think, not only by soldiers, but still more so by officers (by "officers" I mean all military authorities, from Subalterns to Generals), who enter the military service or continue in it, not by compulsion as privates do, but by their own free will. It was pardonable a hundred or fifty years ago, when war was regarded as an inevitable condition of the life of nations, when the men of the country with whom one was at war were regarded as barbarians, without religion, and evil-doers, and when it did not enter the mind of military men that they were required for the suppression and "pacification" of one's own people, — it was pardonable then to put on a multi-colored uniform trimmed with gold braid and to saunter about with a clashing sword and jingling spurs, or to caracole in front of one's regiment, imagining oneself a hero, who, if he has not yet sacrificed his life for the defense of his fatherland, is nevertheless ready to do so. But at the present time, when frequent international communications, commercial, social, scientific, artistic, have so brought nations in touch with one another that any contemporary international war is like a dispute in a family, and breaks the most sacred human ties, — when hundreds of peace societies and thousands of articles, not only in special but also in the ordinary newspapers, unceasingly demonstrate from every side the senselessness of militarism, and the possibility, even necessity, of abolishing war; — at the present time, when, above all, the military are more and more often called out, not against foreign foes to repel invasions, or for the aggrandizement of the glory and power of their country, but against unarmed factory workmen or peasants, — at the present time to caracole on one's

¹ See p. 67. — Eds.

little horse in one's little embroidered uniform and to advance dashing at the head of one's company, is no longer a silly, pardonable piece of vanity as it was before, but something quite different.

In past times, in the days say of Nicholas I., it entered into no one's head that troops are necessary chiefly to shoot at unarmed populaces. But at present troops are permanently stationed in every large town and manufacturing centre for the purpose of being ready to disperse gatherings of workmen; and seldom a month passes without soldiers being called out of their barracks with ball cartridges and hidden in secret places in readiness to shoot the populace down at any moment.

The use of troops against the people has become indeed not only customary,—they are mobilized in advance to be in readiness for this very purpose; and the Governments do not conceal the fact that the distribution of recruits in the various regiments is intentionally conducted in such a way that the men are never drafted into a regiment stationed in the place from which they are drawn. This is done for the purpose of avoiding the possibility of soldiers having to shoot at their own relations.

The German Emperor, at every fresh call for recruits, has openly declared and still declares that soldiers who have been sworn in belong to him, body and soul; that they have only one foe—his foe; and that this foe are the Socialists (that is, workmen), whom the soldiers must, if he bids them, shoot down (*niederschliessen*), even if they should be their own brothers or even parents.

In past times, moreover, if the troops were used against the people, those against whom they were used were, or at all events were supposed to be, evil-doers, ready to kill and ruin the peaceful inhabitants, and whom therefore it might be supposed to be necessary to destroy for the general good. But at present every one knows that those against whom troops are called out are for the most part peaceful, industrious men, who merely desire to profit unhindered by the fruits of their labors. So that the principal permanent function of

the troops in our time no longer consists in an imaginary defense against irreligious and in general external foes, and not against internal foes in the persons of riotous evil-doers, but in killing one's own unarmed brothers, who are by no means evil-doers, but peaceful, industrious men whose only desire is that they shall not be deprived of their earnings. So that military service at the present time, when its chief object is, by murder and the threat of murder, to keep enslaved men in those unjust conditions in which they are placed, is not only not a noble but a positively dastardly undertaking. And therefore it is indispensable that officers who serve at the present time should consider whom they serve, and ask themselves whether what they are doing is good or evil.

I know that there are many officers, especially of the higher grades, who by various arguments on the themes of orthodoxy, autocracy, integrity of the State, eternal inevitableness of war, necessity of order, inconsistency of socialistic ravings, and so on, try to prove to themselves that their activity is rational and useful, and contains nothing immoral. But in the depths of their soul they themselves do not believe in what they say, and the more intelligent and the older they become the less they believe.

I remember how joyously I was struck by a friend and old comrade of mine, a very ambitious man, who had dedicated his whole life to the military service, and had attained the highest honors and grades (General Aides-de-Camp and Major-General), when he told me that he had burnt his "Memoirs" of the wars in which he had participated because he had changed his view of the military activity, and now regarded every war as an evil deed, which should not be encouraged by participation, but, on the contrary, should be discredited in every way. Many officers think the same, although they do not say so while they serve. And indeed no thoughtful officer can think otherwise. Why, one has only to recall to mind what forms the occupation of all officers, from the lowest to the highest—to the Commandant of an Army Corps. From the beginning to the end of their

service — I am alluding to officers in the active service — their activity, with the exception of the few and short periods when they go to war and are occupied with actual murder, consists in the attainment of two aims: in teaching soldiers the best methods of killing men, and in accustoming them to an obedience which enables them to do mechanically, without argument, everything their commander orders. In olden times it used to be said, “Flog two to death, and train one,” and so they did. If at present the proportion of flogged to death is smaller, the principle nevertheless is the same. One cannot reduce men into that state, not of animals but of machines, in which they will commit the deed most repulsive to the nature of man and to the faith he professes, namely, murder, at the bidding of any commander, — unless not only artful frauds but also the most cruel violence have been perpetrated on them. And so it is in practice.

Not long ago a great sensation was created in the French press by the disclosure by a journalist of those awful tortures to which soldiers in the Disciplinary Battalions are submitted on the Island of Obrou, six hours' distance from Paris. The men punished have their hands and feet tied together behind their back and are then thrown to the ground; instruments are fixed on their thumbs while their hands are twisted behind their backs, and screwed up so that every movement produces a dreadful pain; they are hung with their legs upward; and so forth.

When we see trained animals accomplishing things contrary to nature: dogs walking on their fore legs, elephants rolling barrels, tigers playing with lions, and so on, we know that all this has been attained by the torments of hunger, whip, and red-hot iron. And when we see men in uniforms with rifles standing motionless, or performing all together the same movement, — running, jumping, shooting, shouting, and so on, — in general, producing those fine reviews and manœuvres which emperors and kings so admire and show off one before the other, we know the same. One cannot cauterize

out of a man all that is human and reduce him to the state of a machine without torturing him, and torturing not in a simple way but in the most refined, cruel way, — at one and the same time torturing and deceiving him.

And all this is done by you officers. In this all your service consists, from the highest grade to the lowest, with the exception of those rare occasions when you participate in real war.

A youth transported from his family to the other end of the world comes to you, after having been taught that that deceptive oath forbidden by the Gospel which he has taken irretrievably binds him, — as a cock when laid on the floor with a line drawn over its nose and along the floor thinks that it is bound by that line, — he comes to you with complete submissiveness and the hope that you his elders, men more intelligent and learned than he, will teach him all that is good. And you, instead of freeing him from those superstitions which he has brought with him, inoculate him with new, most senseless, coarse, and pernicious superstitions: about the sanctity of the banner, the almost divine position of the Tsar, the duty of absolute obedience to the authorities. And when with the help of the methods for stultifying men which are elaborated in your organization you reduce him to a position worse than animal, to a position where he is ready to kill every one he is ordered to kill, even his unarmed brothers, you exhibit him with pride to your superiors, and receive in return their thanks and rewards. It is terrible to be a murderer oneself, but by cunning and cruel methods to reduce one's confiding brothers to this state is the most terrible crime of all. And this you accomplish, and in this consists the whole of your service.

It is therefore not astonishing that amongst you more than amongst any other class everything which will stifle conscience flourishes: smoking, cards, drunkenness, depravity; and that suicides occur amongst you more frequently than anywhere else.

"It is impossible but that offenses will come, but woe unto him through whom they come."

You often say that you serve because if you did not the existing order would be destroyed and disturbances and every kind of calamities would occur.

But firstly, it is not true that you are concerned with the maintenance of the existing order : you are concerned only with your own advantages.

Secondly, even if your abstinence from military service did destroy the existing order, this would in no way prove that you should continue to do what is wrong, but only that the order which is being destroyed by your abstinence should be destroyed. Were establishments of the most useful kind — hospitals, schools, homes, to depend for their support on the profits from houses of ill-fame, no consideration of the good produced by these philanthropic establishments would retain in her position the woman who desired to free herself from her shameful trade.

“It is not my fault,” the woman would say, “that you have founded your philanthropic institutions on vice. I no longer wish to live in vice. As to your institutions, they do not concern me.” And so should every soldier say if the necessity of maintaining the existing order founded on his readiness to murder were put before him. “Organize the general order in a way that will not require murder,” the soldier should say. “And then I shall not destroy it. I only do not wish to and cannot be a murderer.”

Many of you say also: “I was educated thus. I am tied by my position, and cannot escape.” But this also is not true.

You can always escape from your position. If, however, you do not, it is only because you prefer to live and act against your conscience rather than lose certain worldly advantages which your dishonest service affords. Only forget that you are an officer and recall to mind that you are a man, and the way of escape from your position will immediately disclose itself to you. This way of escape in its best and most honest form would consist in your calling together the men of whom you are in command,

stepping in front, and asking their pardon for all the evil you have done them by deception — and then cease to serve in the army. Such an action seems very bold, demanding great courage, whereas in reality much less courage is required for such an action than to storm a fortification or to challenge a man to a duel for an insult to the uniform, — which you as a soldier are always ready to do, and do.

But even without being capable of acting thus you can always, if you have understood the criminality of military service, leave it and give preference to any other activity though less advantageous.

But if you cannot do even this, then the solution for you of the question whether you will continue to serve or not will be postponed to that time — and this will soon appear for each one of you — when you will stand face to face with an unarmed crowd of peasants or factory workers, and be ordered to shoot at them. And then, if anything human remains in you, you will have to refuse to obey, and, as a result, to leave the service.

I know that there are still many officers, from the highest to the lowest ranks, who are so unenlightened or hypnotized that they do not see the necessity of either the one, the other, or the third solution, and quietly continue to serve even in the present conditions, ready to shoot at their brothers and even priding themselves upon this; but happily public opinion punishes such people with more and more repulsion and disapproval, and their number continually becomes smaller and smaller.

So that in our time, when the fratricidal function of the army has become evident, officers not only can no longer continue in the ancient traditions of military self-complacent bravado, — they cannot continue the criminal work of teaching murder to simple men confiding in them, and themselves to prepare for participation in murdering unarmed populations, without the consciousness of their human degradation and shame.

It is this which should be understood and remembered by every thinking and conscientious officer of our time.

“NOTES FOR SOLDIERS”

(December 20, 1901)

“Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body.”

—MATT. x. 28.

“We must obey God rather than men.” — ACTS v. 29.

YOU are a soldier. You have been taught to shoot, to stab, to march, to do gymnastics. You have been taught to read and write, led to exercises and reviews; perhaps have been in a campaign and have fought with the Turks or Chinese, obeying all your orders. It has not even entered your head to ask yourself whether what you were ordered to do was good or bad.

But suddenly an order is received that your company or squadron shall march out, taking ball cartridges. You go without asking where you are being led.

You are brought to a village or factory, and you see before you gathered in an open space a crowd of villagers or factory hands, — men, women with children, aged folk. The governor and public prosecutor approach the crowd with policemen and say something. The crowd is at first silent, then begins to shout louder and louder; and the authorities retreat. And you guess that the peasants or factory hands are rioting, and that you have been brought to “pacify” them. The authorities several times retreat from the crowd and again approach it, but the shouts become louder and louder, and the authorities consult each other and at last give you the order to load your rifles with the ball cartridges. You see before you men such as those from amongst whom you have been taken, — men in peasants’ coats, sheepskin overcoats, and bark shoes, and women in kerchiefs and jackets, — women like your wife and mother.

The first shot is ordered to be fired above the heads

of the crowd. But the crowd does not disperse, and shouts even louder; and you are then ordered to shoot in earnest, not over the heads, but straight into the middle, of the crowd.

It has been instilled into you that you are not responsible for the consequences of your shots. But you know that the man who falls bleeding from your shot is killed by you and by no one else, and you know that you could have refrained from shooting and that then the man would not have been killed.

What are you to do?

It would not be enough to lay down your rifle and refuse in this instance to shoot your brothers; for tomorrow the same thing could reoccur. And therefore, whether you wish it or not, you have to recollect yourselves and ask, "What is this soldier's calling which has brought me to the necessity of shooting my unarmed brothers?"

You are told in the Gospel that one should not only refrain from killing his brothers, but should not do that which leads to murder: one should not be angry with one's brothers, nor hate one's enemies, but love them.

In the law of Moses you are distinctly told, "Thou shalt not kill," without any reservations as to whom you can and whom you cannot kill. Whereas in the regulations which you have been taught you are told that a soldier must fulfil any order whatsoever of his superior, except an order against the Tsar; and in explanation of the Sixth Commandment you are told that although by this commandment killing is forbidden, yet he who kills an enemy during war does not sin against this commandment.¹ And in the "Notes for Soldiers" which hang in your barracks, and which you have many times read and listened to, it is explained how a soldier should kill men: "If three fall on you, shoot one, stab another, and

¹ In your regulations you are told: "By the Sixth Commandment God forbids the taking of man's life by violence or cunning, and the disturbance in any way of one's neighbor's peace and safety; and therefore this commandment also forbids quarrels, anger, hatred, jealousy, cruelty. But he who kills the enemy in war does not sin against the Sixth Commandment, because in war we defend our faith, sovereign, and country."

finish the third with the bayonet. . . . If your bayonet breaks, strike with the stock; if the stock gives way, hit with your fists; if your fists are hurt, bite with your teeth.”

You are told that you must kill, because you have taken the oath, and that not you but your commanders will be responsible for your actions.

But before you took the oath, that is, before you promised men to obey their will, it was your duty, without need of oaths, to obey in everything the will of God, of Him who gave you life; and God forbids killing.

So that you could by no means swear that you would obey everything men might command. This is why it is distinctly stated in the Gospel, Matt. v. 34-37: “Swear not at all. . . . But let your speech be, Yea, yea; nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.”

And in the Epistle of James, chap. v. 12, the same thing is said, “But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth.” So that to take the oath is a sin. As to what they say about your commanders, not yourselves, being responsible for your deeds, this is obviously a falsehood. Is your conscience not in you, but in your sergeant, captain, colonel, or some one else? No one can decide for you what you can and must, and what you cannot and should not do. And a man is always responsible for what he does. Is not the sin of adultery much easier than that of murder? and yet can one man say to another: “Go and commit adultery. I shall bear your sin, because I am your commander”?

According to the Biblical narrative Adam sinned against God, and then said that his wife told him to eat the apple, while his wife said she was tempted by the devil. God exonerated neither Adam nor Eve, but told them that because Adam listened to the voice of his wife he would be punished, and that his wife would be punished for listening to the serpent. And neither were excused, but both were punished. Will not God say the same to you also when you kill a man and say that your captain ordered you to do it?

The deceit is apparent already, because in the regu-

lation obliging a soldier to obey all his commander's orders, these words are added, "*Except such as tend toward the injury of the Tsar.*"

If a soldier before obeying the orders of his commander must first decide whether it is not against the Tsar, how then can he fail to consider before obeying his commander's order whether it is not against his supreme King, God? And no action is more opposed to the will of God than that of killing men. And therefore you *cannot* obey men if they order you to kill. If you obey, and kill, you do so only for the sake of your own advantage, — to escape punishment. So that in killing by order of your commander you are a murderer as much as the thief who kills a rich man to rob him. He is tempted by money, and you by the desire not to be punished, or to receive a reward. Man is always responsible before God for his actions. And no power, whatever the authorities desire, can turn a live man into a dead thing which one can move about as one likes. Christ taught men that they are all sons of God, and therefore a Christian cannot surrender his conscience into the power of another man, no matter by what title he may be called: King, Tsar, Emperor. As to those men who have assumed power over you, demanding of you the murder of your brothers, this only shows that they are deceivers, and that therefore one should not obey them. Shameful is the position of the prostitute who is always ready to give her body to be defiled by any one her master indicates; but yet more shameful is the position of a soldier always ready for the greatest of crimes — the murder of any man whom his commander indicates.

And therefore if you do indeed desire to act according to God's will you have only to do one thing — to throw off the shameful and ungodly calling of a soldier, and be ready to bear any sufferings which may be inflicted upon you for so doing.

So that the true "Notes" for a Christian Soldier are not those in which it is said that "God is the Soldiers' General" and other blasphemies, and that the

soldier must obey his commanders in everything, and be ready to kill foreigners and even his own unarmed brothers, — but those which remind one of the words of the Gospel that one *should obey God rather than men* and fear not those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul.

In this alone consists the true, unfraudulent “Notes for Soldiers.”

In Dragomiroff’s “Notes for Soldiers” three passages are quoted from the Gospels: John xv. 10–13 and Matthew x. 22, 39. From John the words of the 13th verse are quoted: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;” evidently for the purpose of implying that soldiers fighting in battle should defend their comrades to the utmost of their strength.

These words however cannot possibly refer to military action, but mean exactly the reverse. In verses 10–13 it is said: “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

So that the words, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,” do not at all mean that a soldier should defend his comrades, but that a Christian should be ready to surrender his life for the fulfilment of Christ’s commandment that men should love one another. And therefore he should be ready to sacrifice his life rather than consent to kill men.

From Matthew the end of the 22d verse of the 10th chapter is quoted, “He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved,” evidently in the sense that a soldier who fights bravely will be saved from the enemy. But again the meaning of this passage is not at all what the compiler wishes to attribute to it, but a contrary one.

The complete verse is: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

So that obviously this verse cannot relate to soldiers, soldiers not being hated by any one for Christ's name: and it is clear therefore that only those people can be hated for Christ's name who refuse in his name to do what the world demands of them, and, in the case in point, soldiers who disobey when murder is demanded of them.

Again, the end of the 39th verse of the 10th chapter of Matthew is quoted: "He that loseth his life shall find it," also in the sense that he who is killed in war will be rewarded in Heaven. But the sense is obviously not this. In the 38th verse it is said, "He that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me," and after this is added, "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it;" that is, that he who desires to safeguard his corporal life rather than fulfil the teaching of love will lose his true life, but he who does not safeguard his corporal life, but fulfils the teaching of love, will gain the true, spiritual, eternal life.

Thus all the three passages assert, not, as the compiler desired, that in obedience to the Authorities one should fight, and crush, and rend men with one's teeth, but, on the contrary, they all, like the whole Gospel, express one and the same thing, — that a Christian cannot be a murderer and therefore cannot be a soldier. And therefore the words, "A soldier is Christ's warrior," placed in the "Notes" after the Gospel verses, do not at all mean what the compiler imagines. It is true that a soldier, if he be a Christian, can and should be Christ's warrior, but he will be Christ's warrior, not when, obeying the will of those commanders who have prepared him for murder, he kills foreigners who have done him no harm, or even his own unarmed fellow-countrymen, but only when he renounces the ungodly and shameful calling of a soldier, in the name of Christ, — and fights not with external foes but with his own commanders

who deceive him and his brothers, and fights them, not with a bayonet, nor with his fists or teeth, but with humble reasonableness and readiness to bear all suffering and even death rather than remain a soldier, — that is, a man ready to kill any one whom his commanders indicate.

[The following are the "Notes for Soldiers" by General Dragomiroff to which Tolstoï alludes. — EDS.]

"NOTES FOR SOLDIERS" (SOLDATSKAYA PAMIATKA),
BY GENERAL DRAGOMIROFF

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." — JOHN xv. 13.

"He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." — MATT. x. 22.

"He that loseth his life shall find it." — MATT. x. 39.

A SOLDIER is Christ's warrior. As such he should regard himself, and so he should behave.

Consider your corps as your family; your commander as your father; your comrade as your brother; your inferior as a young relative. Then all will be happy and friendly and easy.

Don't think of yourself, think of your comrades; they will think of you. Perish yourself, but save your comrade.

Under fire advance in open order; attack together.

Strike with your fist, not with your open hand.

One leg helps the other, one hand strengthens the other. Stick together. One evil is not an evil; two evils are half an evil; separation is the evil.

Don't expect relief. It won't come. Support will come. When you've thrashed them well, then you'll rest.

Only he is beaten who is afraid.

Always attack, never defend.

If your bayonet breaks, strike with the stock; if the stock gives way, hit with your fists; if your fists are hurt, bite with your teeth. Only he wins who fights desperately, to the death.

In action a soldier is like a sentinel; even dying he should not let his rifle go.

Keep your bullet for three days, even for a whole campaign, when you can't get more. Shoot seldom, but well. With the bayonet strike hard. The bullet may miss the mark, but the bayonet will not. The bullet is stupid, the bayonet is the plucky one.

Aim every bullet; to shoot without care only amuses the devil. Only the careful not the chance bullet finds the culprit. Hold your cartridges. If you spend them a long way off, when you get near, just when you want them, you'll have none. For a good soldier, thirty cartridges are enough for the hottest engagement.

From the dead and wounded take their cartridges.

If you knock up against the enemy unexpectedly or he against you, hit without hesitation. Don't let him collect himself. The plucky one is he who first cries "Hurrah." If three fall on you, shoot one, stab another, and finish the third with your bayonet. God defends the brave.

Where a bold one will get through, God will trip up the timid one.

For a good soldier there are neither flanks nor rear, but all is front, where the foe is.

Always keep your face toward the cavalry. Let it come to two hundred yards, give it a volley, put the bayonet into position, and freeze there.

In war a soldier must expect short commons, short sleep, and sore feet. Because it is war. Even an old soldier finds it difficult, and for a green one it is hard. But if it's hard for you it is n't easier for the enemy; maybe harder still. Only you see your own hardships, but don't see the enemy's. Yet they are always there. So don't grow stale, but the harder it is, the more doggedly and desperately fight; when you've won you'll feel better at once, and the enemy worse. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

Don't think that victory can be won straight off. The enemy can also be firm. Sometimes one can't succeed even the second and third times. Go at it a fourth, a fifth, a sixth time, till you win.

When fighting help the sound men. Only think of

the wounded when you have won. The man who bothers about the wounded during the fight and leaves the ranks is a bad soldier and not a kind-hearted man. It is not his comrades who are dear to him but his own skin. If you win it will be well for all, both sound and wounded.

Don't leave your place on the march. If you stop for a minute and fall behind, hurry up and don't lag.

When you reach the bivouac all can't rest. Some must sleep, others guard. He who sleeps, let him sleep in peace till he is wakened; comrades are on guard. He who is on guard, let him watch alertly, though he has marched seventy miles.

When you are an officer, keep your men well in hand. Give your orders intelligently; don't merely cry "Forward, March." First explain what is to be done, so that every man can know where and why he has to go. Then "Forward, March" is all right. Every soldier should understand his actions.

"The chief gets the drink first, and the stick first."

Die for the Orthodox faith, for our father the Tsar, for Holy Russia. The Church prays to God. "He who loses his life will find it." He who survives, to him honor and glory.

Do not offend the native; he feeds and supports. A soldier is not a thief.

Keep yourself clean, your clothes and ammunition in order. Guard your rifle, your biscuits, and your feet as the apple of your eye. Look after your socks (leg bands) and keep them greased. It's better for the foot.

A soldier should be healthy, brave, hardy, determined, just, pious! Pray to God! From Him is the victory! Noble heroes, God leads you, He is your General!

Obedience, education, discipline, cleanliness, health, tidiness, vigor, courage, dash, victory! Glory, glory, glory!

Lord of Hosts, be with us! We have no other helper than Thee in the day of our trouble! Lord of Hosts, have mercy on us!

TRUE CRITICISM

(A PREFACE TO A RUSSIAN EDITION OF THE GERMAN NOVEL, "DER BÜTNERBAUER," BY VON POLENZ)

(1901)

LAST year a friend of mine in whose taste I have confidence gave me to read the German novel "Der Bütnerbauer" by Von Polenz. I read it and was surprised that such a work, having appeared two years ago, was known to hardly any one.

This novel is not one of those imitations of artistic work which are produced in such enormous quantities to-day, but a genuine work of art. It belongs neither to those descriptions, devoid of all interest, of persons and events brought into artificial connection merely because the author, having acquired command of the technique of artistic descriptions, desires to write a new novel; nor to those dissertations on a given theme, clothed in the form of drama or novel, which are also palmed off on the public to-day as artistic productions; nor yet does it belong to those other productions called decadent, which especially attract the modern public owing to the fact that they resemble the ravings of a madman, and present a kind of puzzle, the solution of which affords a pleasant occupation and is at the same time regarded as evidence of refinement.

This novel does not belong to either of these three classes: it is a true artistic production in which the author says what he has to say because he loves the subject of which he is speaking; and he expresses himself, not in arguments nor in cloudy allegories, but in the only way in which one can transmit an artistic sub-

ject: by poetic images, — and not fantastic, extraordinary, and incomprehensible images connected without inherent necessity, but images which represent the most ordinary simple persons and events, connected by inherent artistic necessity.

But more than this: it is not only genuinely artistic, it is also a fine piece of artistic work, uniting in the highest degree all the three essential points of a true work of art.

In the first place, its subject is important, as it deals with the life of the peasantry, that is, with that majority of mankind who are at the foundation of all social structures, and who are experiencing in our day, not only in Germany but in all European countries, an oppressive change in their ancient organization. (It is remarkable that almost at the same time as "*Der Bütnerbauer*" a very tolerable French novel by René Bazin, "*La terre que meurt*," appeared on the same theme, though of much less artistic merit.)

In the second place, it is written in a very masterly manner in an excellent German, which is particularly powerful when the author makes his characters speak in the rough, manly workingman's idiom.

And in the third place, it is penetrated with love toward the characters whom the author introduces.

For example, in one of the chapters there is a description of how, after a night passed with comrades in drinking-shops, a husband returns home in the morning and knocks at his door. The wife looks out of the window, recognizes her husband, loads him with abuse, and is deliberately slow in letting him in. When at last she opens the door, the husband tumbles in and wants to enter the living room; but the wife tries to prevent him so that the children may not see their father in a drunken state, and pushes him back. He clutches hold of the door-jambs and struggles with her. Generally a quiet man, he suddenly becomes furiously angry (the reason being that the day before she had taken from his pocket some money given him by some one and had concealed it), and in his turn he throws

himself upon her, catches her by the hair, and demands his money.

"I won't give it up for anything!" she repeats in answer to his demands, endeavoring to free herself from him.

Then, losing his head completely, he strikes her at random.

"I will die before I give it up," she says.

"But you shall," he shouts, knocking her off her feet and falling down upon her himself, continuing to claim his money. Receiving no answer, in his insane drunken malice he wants to strangle her. But the sight of blood oozing from beneath her hair and trickling down her forehead and nose arrests him. He is afraid of what he has done, leaves her on the floor, staggers to his bed, and falls down upon it.

The scene is truthful and terrible. But the author loves his characters, and adds one little detail which suddenly illuminates the whole with so bright a ray of light that it forces the reader not only to pity but to love these people, notwithstanding all their coarseness and cruelty. The stricken wife comes to herself, gets up from the floor, wipes the blood from her forehead with a corner of her dress, opens the door, quietens her screaming children, and then looks round for her husband. He is lying on the bed as he fell, but his head is hanging down the side and the blood is rushing into it. The wife approaches him and carefully lifts his head, lays it on the pillow, and then rearranges her dress and disentangles from her head a handful of hair which her husband had torn out.

Dozens of pages of argument could not convey what is expressed in this detail.

Here is revealed to the reader at one and the same time both the consciousness, educated by tradition, of wifely duty, and the triumph of a maintained resolution not to surrender money necessary, not for herself, but for the family. Here we have both injury and forgiveness, pity, and, if not love, the recollection of love toward one's husband, the father of one's children. But more

than this. Such a detail, illuminating the inner life of this wife and this husband, throws a light for the reader upon the inner life of millions of similar husbands and wives, both of those who lived before, and who live now. It calls forth not only respect and love toward these men and women, crushed by labor, but also forces one to reflect on the reason why such people, strong in body and spirit, with such possibilities of a good and loving life, are so neglected, downtrodden, and unenlightened.

And such true artistic features, produced only by love toward the subject of which the author writes, are to be met with in every chapter of this book.

This novel is undoubtedly a fine work of art, as every one who reads it will agree, and yet although it appeared nearly three years ago and although a translation was published in one of our best Russian periodicals, it has passed quite unnoticed both in Russia and Germany. I have inquired about this book of several German literary men I have met lately; they had heard the name of Polenz but had not read his novel, although they had all read Zola's last novels and Kipling's stories and Ibsen's dramas, and D'Annuncio, and even Maeterlinck.

Twenty years ago Matthew Arnold wrote an excellent article about the object of criticism. In his opinion the object of criticism consists in finding what is most important and good amidst all that has been written in any place and at any time, and in drawing the attention of readers to this important and good.

Such a criticism, in our day, when people are being drowned in a flood of newspapers, journals, books, and the development of the art of advertising, appear to me not only necessary—the whole future of the enlightenment of the cultured class of our European world even depends upon whether such a criticism will appear and become authoritative.

The overproduction of any article is harmful; but the overproduction of articles which represent not an end but a means is especially harmful, when this means is regarded as an end.

Horses and carriages as means of locomotion, houses

and clothes as means of shelter, good food as the means of maintaining the strength of one's organism, are all very useful. But as soon as people begin to regard the possession of such means as ends in themselves, believing it good to have as many horses, houses, clothes, and foods as possible, — then these things become not only not useful but distinctly harmful. So it has happened with the production of books in the well-to-do circle of our European society. For a long time past, in the well-to-do circle, the publication of books, which is undoubtedly useful for the great insufficiently educated masses, has been the chief organ for the dissemination of ignorance, and not of enlightenment.

It is very easy to become convinced of this. In our day, books, magazines, and especially newspapers have become great financial undertakings, for the success of which the greatest possible number of consumers is necessary. The interests and tastes of the majority of consumers being always low and coarse, it is necessary, to secure success, that the literary productions shall be concerned with low interests and correspond to low tastes; that is, shall meet the demands of the majority. And the press completely satisfies these demands, which it has the full possibility of doing, as amongst its workers there are always many more with the same low interests and coarse tastes as the public, than with lofty interests and refined tastes. And as these individuals receive ample remuneration for the works they supply to meet the tastes of the masses, owing to the development of book-printing and the new methods of speculating in magazines, newspapers, and books, — that terrible and ever increasing flood of printed paper has appeared which by its volume alone, to say nothing of its contents, presents an immense obstacle to enlightenment.

If, in our day, an intelligent young man from the ranks who wished to educate himself were to obtain access to all the books, journals, and newspapers, and left to himself to choose his reading, then all the chances are that, reading incessantly every day for ten years,

he would read only silly and immoral books. To come across a good book would be for him as improbable as to find a marked pea in a sackful. And the worst of it is that, continually reading bad works, his tastes and understanding would continually become more perverted, so that when he did light on a good work he would either not understand it at all, or misunderstand it.

Besides this, thanks to the eventualities and the skill of modern advertising, some poor works (such for instance as "The Christian," by Hall Caine, a novel false in its subject, and inartistic, which was purchased in enormous quantities) attain, like "Odol" and Pears' Soap, reputations unjustified by their merits. These great reputations continually force a greater number of people to read such books. And while the reputation of insignificant, often harmful, books continually increases like a snowball, a similar snowball, of greater and greater confusion of ideas, and an utter incapacity of understanding the merits of literary works, continually accumulates in the heads of the great majority of men. Therefore, in proportion to the greater and greater circulation of newspapers, magazines, and books, that is to say in general of the increase of book-printing, the level of merit descends lower and lower, and the great mass of the so-called educated public becomes deeper and deeper immersed in the most hopeless, self-complacent, and therefore incurable, ignorance.

In my memory, during the last fifty years, a striking degradation of the taste and common sense of the reading public has taken place. One can see this degradation in all the fields of literature, but I will indicate only a few of the most marked examples known to me. In Russian poetry, for instance, after Pushkin, Lermontoff (Tutcheff is generally forgotten), poetic reputation passed first to the very doubtful poets, Maikoff, Polonsky, Fet; then to Nekrassoff, altogether devoid of poetic talent; then to the artificial and prosaic rhymester Alexis Tolstoy; then to the monotonous and weak Nadson; then to the completely giftless Apouhtin; and

then everything is muddled, and rhymesters appear whose name is legion, who do not know what poetry is, what is the meaning of their writings, nor why they write.

Another striking example is that of the English prose writers: From the great Dickens one descends first to George Eliot, then to Thackeray, from Thackeray to Trollope, and after that begin the indifferent fabrications of Collins, Kiplings, Rider Haggards, and so on. The same, in a yet more striking way, is seen in American literature: after the great Pleiad of Emerson, Thoreau, Lowell, Whittier, and others, there is a sudden break, and beautiful editions with beautiful illustrations appear, containing stories and novels which it is impossible to read for the want of any matter in them.

In our day the ignorance of the educated crowd has already reached the stage when all true great thinkers, poets, prose writers, both of antiquity and of the nineteenth century, are regarded as out of date and no longer capable of satisfying the refined and lofty demands of new humanity; they all are regarded with contempt or with a smile of condescension. The immoral, coarse, bombastic, disjointed prattle of Nietzsche is accepted to-day as the last word of philosophy; a senseless, artificial combination of words connected only by rhyme and rhythm, in various decadent verse, is regarded as poetry of the highest order; in all the theatres plays are given the sense of which is comprehensible to no one, not excepting the author; and novels which contain neither subject nor art are printed and disseminated in millions of copies under the pretext of being works of art.

"What am I to read to complete my education?" a young man or girl asks, upon leaving the higher school. The man from the ranks who has learnt to read and to understand what he reads, and is in search of true enlightenment, asks the same.

The naïve attempt to inquire of distinguished men the hundred books they regard as best is of course insufficient to answer such questions.

Nor is any help afforded by the division, current in our European society and tacitly accepted by every one, of all writers into categories of the first, second, third, etc., orders; into geniuses, men of great talent, talent, merely clever. Such a division not only fails to assist the true understanding of the merits of literature, and the discovery of what is good in the sea of what is bad, but even hinders it. And besides the fact that this division into categories is itself very often mistaken, and is upheld only because it was established long ago and is accepted by every one, — besides this, such a division is harmful because writers who are recognized as of the highest order produce some very bad works, and those of the lowest order some admirable ones. So that the man who accepts the division of writers into categories and the idea that all a first-rate writer produces is excellent, and that all the productions of a man of a lower category, or quite unknown, are necessarily weak, such a man becomes confused in his appreciations, and is deprived of much that is useful and truly enlightening.

Only true criticism can answer the most important question to-day of the youth of the cultured classes who is in search of knowledge, or of the man from the ranks who is in search of enlightenment. Not the criticism existing to-day, the aim of which is to praise the works which have become famous and to invent for their justification cloudy philosophico-esthetic theories. Not the criticism which is occupied in ridiculing, more or less humorously, works considered bad, or those of another camp. And still less the criticism, established and still flourishing amongst us, which has for its object the definition of the direction in which society as a whole is moving, founded on types described by various authors, and in general of expressing the critic's own economic and political views under the guise of reviews of literary works.

The answer to the stupendously important question: What is one to read out of all that is written? can be given only by true criticism, — that criticism whose object, as Matthew Arnold says, is to bring forward and

point out to men all that is best both in past and present writers.

From the event whether such a criticism, — disinterested, independent of any party, understanding and loving art, will appear, or not, and whether its authority will be great enough to overcome the commercial puffing of books — depends, in my opinion, the solution to the question whether the last glimmering of enlightenment will perish in our so-called cultured European society before it has spread amongst the masses; or whether it will revive, as it did in the Middle Ages, and spread amongst the majority of the people, who are now deprived of all enlightenment.

The public ignorance of Polenz's fine novel, as well as of many other good works that are drowned in the sea of printed rubbish, while senseless, insignificant, and even absolutely objectionable literary works are discussed on all sides from every point of view, always praised, and dispersed by the million, has called forth these thoughts in me, and I profit by this occasion, which will hardly present itself to me again, of expressing them, however briefly.

THE ONLY MEANS

(August, 1901)

"All things, therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them : for this is the law and the prophets."
— MATT. vii. 12.

I

THERE are more than a thousand millions of working-men in the world. All the bread, all the goods of the whole world, all wherewith people live and are rich, all this is produced by the working-man. But it is not he who profits by the things he produces, but the Government and the rich, — whereas the working population lives in continual need, ignorance, and bondage, and in the contempt of those very people whom they clothe, feed, house, and serve.

The land is taken from the laborer and regarded as the property of those who do not work it, so that in order to be fed by the land the man who works it must do everything the owners demand. If the laborer leaves the land, and enters service or mills or factories, he falls into bondage to other wealthy people, for whom during the whole of his life he has to work ten, twelve, fourteen or more hours a day, at alien, monotonous, tedious work, often pernicious to health and life. If he is able to settle on the land or to procure work so as to feed himself without want, then he is not left alone, but taxes are demanded of him, and in addition he himself is taken for three, four, five years into military service, or is forced to pay taxes for military purposes. If he desires to use the land without payment, or to arrange strikes, or to hinder other workmen from occupying his place, or if he refuses to pay taxes, then troops are

sent against him, he is wounded, killed, and compelled by force to work and to pay just as before.

So that the working-men all over the world live, not like men, but like beasts of burden who are compelled all their life to do not what is necessary to them, but to their oppressors, receiving in return only just so much food, clothing, and rest as enables them to go on working unceasingly. Whereas that small group of people who dominate the laborers, profiting by all they produce, live in idleness and insane luxury, uselessly and immorally squandering the labor of millions.

And thus the majority of the population of the whole world lives, not in Russia only, but also in France, and in Germany, and in England, and in China, and in India, and in Africa: everywhere. Whose fault is this? And how shall this be put right? Some say that it is the fault of those who possess the land without working it, and that it is necessary to give the land to the workers; others say that it is the fault of the rich who own the instruments of labor, that is, factories and mills, and that it is necessary that the factories and mills shall become the property of the workmen. Others again say that the whole organization of life is to blame, and that it is necessary to change this organization altogether.

Is this true?

II

ABOUT five years ago, during the coronation of Nicholas II. at Moscow, the people were offered a free supply of beer, brandy, and buns. When the crowd proceeded to the place where these things were being distributed, a crush ensued. Those in front were knocked off their feet by those behind, and these were crushed by those yet farther back; and no one seeing what was happening in front, they all kept pushing and pressing each other on. The weak were overthrown by the strong, and then the strong ones themselves, suffocated by the crush and want of air, also fell to the ground and were trampled by those who were

pushed from behind and could not halt. And thus several thousand people, old and young, men and women, were crushed to death.

When it was all over people began to argue as to who was to blame for it. Some said it was the police; others the organizers; others that the fault was the Tsar's, who had initiated the silly device of such an entertainment. People accused every one except themselves. And yet it would appear clear that only those were to blame who, in order to obtain a handful of cake and a pot of beer before their neighbors, rushed forward without paying attention to the others, and hustled and trampled them.

Is not the same thing taking place with the working people? They are exhausted, crushed, enslaved, only because for some miserable advantage they themselves ruin their own lives and those of their brothers.

The laborers complain of the landlords, of the Governments, of the factory owners, of the military. But the landowners exploit land, the Governments collect taxes, factory owners dispose of the workmen, and the troops suppress strikes, only because the laborers themselves not only help the landowners, the Government, the factory owners, the troops, but they themselves do all those things of which they complain. If a landowner can profit by thousands of acres of land without cultivating it himself, it is only because the workmen, for their own profit, go to work for him, and serve him as watchmen, keepers, foremen. So also the Government collects taxes from the workmen only because they themselves, attracted by the wages collected from themselves, become village and district elders,¹ tax-collectors, policemen, excise and customs officials; that is, help the Government to do those things of which they complain. The workmen also complain that the factory owners reduce their pay and compel them to work more and more hours; but this also is done only because the workmen themselves lower the wages by competition, and also hire themselves to the factory owners as ware-

¹ Official functions performed by Russian peasants elected for the purpose by the peasants themselves. — TR.

housemen, overseers, watchmen, and foremen; and search, fine, and in every way oppress their comrades in the interests of their masters.

Lastly, the workmen complain that troops are sent against them if they wish to appropriate the land which they regard as their own, or if they refrain from paying taxes, or organize strikes; but the troops are composed of soldiers, and soldiers are those same workmen, who for personal advantage or from fear of punishment have entered the military service, and, contrary both to their conscience and to the law of God they acknowledge, have taken an oath that they will kill all whom the authorities order them to kill.

So that all the calamities of the workmen are produced by themselves.

They need only cease to help the rich and the Governments, and all their sufferings would cease of themselves.

Why then do they continue doing that which ruins them?

III

Two thousand years ago a law of God became known to men, the law of reciprocity, that *one should act unto others as one wishes others to act to oneself*, or, as it is expressed by the Chinese teacher Confucius, "Do not do unto others that which you do not wish others to do unto you."

This law is simple, comprehensible to every one, and obviously gives the greatest welfare possible to man. And therefore it would seem that as soon as men had learned this law they ought immediately, as far as possible, to fulfil it themselves, and to use all their powers to teach this law and its fulfilment to the rising generations.

It would seem that long ago all men ought to have acted thus, as this law was expressed almost simultaneously by Confucius and Buddha and the Jewish teacher Hillel and by Jesus.

Especially it would seem that the men of our Christian world ought to act thus, recognizing as they do, as the chief divine revelation, that Gospel in which it is explicitly taught that in this law "is all the law and the prophets," that is, all the teaching necessary to man.

And yet almost two thousand years have elapsed and men not only refrain from fulfilling this law and from teaching it to their children, but in most cases they do not themselves even know it, or if they do they regard it either as unnecessary or as unpractical.

At first this seems strange, but when one thinks of how people lived before the discovery of this law, and how long they lived so, and of how the law disagrees with the life of humanity as it has developed, then one begins to understand why it happened that the law was not fulfilled.

It happened because while men did not know the law that for the welfare of all each should do unto others that which he would have others do unto him (the law of reciprocity), every man endeavored, for his own profit, to appropriate as much power as possible over other men.

And having appropriated such power, he had in his turn, in order to profit by it unhindered, to subordinate himself to those who were stronger than he, and to help them. These stronger ones in their turn had to submit to those who were stronger than they, and to help them.

So that in societies which did not know the law of reciprocity, of acting with others as one wishes others to act with oneself, always a small number of men dominated all the rest.

And therefore it is comprehensible that when this law was revealed to men, the small number of those who dominated the rest not only were averse to accepting it for themselves, but also could not desire that those dominated by them should learn and accept it.

The small number of dominating people knew and know very well that their power was and is founded only on the fact that those they dominate are continually fighting among themselves, endeavoring to subju-

gate each other. And therefore they have used and are always using all the means in their power to conceal this law from their subordinates.

They conceal the law, not by denying it, which is impossible, as it is so clear and simple, but by putting forward hundreds, thousands of other laws which they assert are more important and obligatory than this law of reciprocity.

Some of these men, priests, teach hundreds of ecclesiastical dogmas, rites, offerings, liturgies, which have nothing in common with the law of reciprocity, and announce *them* as the most important laws of God, the neglect of which involves eternal ruin.

Others, the rulers, having appropriated the teaching invented by the priests, institute, on the strength of this, State regulations, which are directly contrary to the law of reciprocity, and under threat of punishment demand from all their fulfilment.

Others again, learned and rich men, acknowledging neither God nor any obligatory divine law, teach that there is only science and its laws, which they, the learned, discover, and the rich know, and that in order that it should be well for all, it is necessary that people should cultivate through the medium of schools, lectures, theatres, concerts, picture galleries, meetings, the same idle life led by the learned and the rich, and then, they affirm, all the evil from which the workmen suffer will destroy itself.

None of these classes repudiate the law itself, but they put forward side by side with it such a number of all kinds of theological, State, and scientific laws, that amidst them all that simple, clear, and universally accessible law of God, the fulfilment of which undoubtedly delivers the majority of men from their sufferings, not only becomes imperceptible, but completely disappears.

It is from this cause the wonderful fact has arisen and still arises, that working-men, crushed by the Government and the wealthy, continue, generation after generation, to ruin their own lives and the lives of their brothers; to resort for the alleviation of their position to

the most complicated, or cunning, or difficult means, such as prayers, offerings, meek fulfilment of State demands, meetings, associations, trade unions, strikes, revolutions; but do not resort to *the only means*: the fulfilment of the law of God, which most certainly would liberate them from their calamities.

IV

“BUT is it possible that in so simple and short an utterance, that people should act with others as they desire others to act with them, the whole law of God and the entire guidance of man’s life can consist?” those will say who are accustomed to the complication and intricacy of theological, State, and scientific arguments.

Such people imagine that the law of God and the guidance of man’s life *must* be expressed in diffuse, complicated theories, and therefore cannot be expressed in so short and simple a statement.

It is true that this law of reciprocity is very short and simple, but it is precisely this shortness and simplicity which demonstrates that it is a true, indubitable, eternal, and righteous law; a law of God elaborated by thousands of years of the life of all humanity, and not the production of one man or of one group of men calling themselves the Church, the State, or Science. Theological discussions about the fall of a first man, his redemption, and the second advent; or State and scientific discussions about parliaments, supreme authority, the theory of punishment, property value, classification of science, natural selection, and so forth, — may be very witty and profound, but are always accessible only to a small number of men. Whereas the law of acting with others as one wishes they would act with oneself is accessible to all men, without distinction of race, religion, education, or even age.

Besides this, theological, State, or scientific arguments, which are accepted as true at one place and at one time, are regarded as untrue at another place and

another time; whereas this law of reciprocity, wherever known, is universally regarded as true, and cannot cease to be true for those who have once comprehended it.

But the chief distinction between this law and all others, and its principal advantage, is that all theological, State, scientific laws, not only fail to pacify men and to give them welfare, but often it is precisely these laws which produce the greatest enmity and suffering.

The law of doing unto others as you wish others to do to you, or of not doing to others as you do not wish to be treated, if only it were recognized by you, could not produce anything but concord and welfare. And therefore the consequences of this law are infinitely beneficial and diverse, determining all possible mutual relations of men, and everywhere substituting concord and service for discord and strife. Were men only to liberate themselves from the frauds which conceal this law from them, to recognize its imperativeness, and to cultivate its adaptation to life, a science, non-existent at present, would appear, common to all men, and the most important in the world: a science teaching how, on the basis of this law, all collisions could be avoided, both between separate individuals and between individuals and society. And if this as yet non-existent science were established and cultivated, and taught to all adults and children as pernicious superstitions and often useless or harmful sciences are now taught, then the whole life of man would change, and with it those oppressive conditions in which the enormous majority of mankind now live.

V

THE Biblical tradition affirms that long before this law of reciprocity was revealed God gave man "His law."

In this law was included the Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." This Commandment, for its time, was as important and fruitful as the later law of reciprocity,

but the same thing happened with the former as with the latter. It was not directly repudiated by men, but like the later law it became lost amid other rules and regulations, which were recognized as equally or even more important than the law of the inviolability of human life. If this injunction had existed alone, and if Moses (according to tradition) had brought down on his tablets as the sole Commandment of God merely these words, "Thou shalt not kill," men would have had to recognize the unalterable imperativeness of this law, admitting of no substitute. And if men were to recognize this command as the sole law of God, and to observe it strictly, even if only as strictly as some observe the keeping of the Sabbath, worshiping *ikons*, the sacrament, abstinence from pork, and so forth, then the whole life of mankind would change; neither wars nor slavery would any longer be possible, nor the expropriation of the land by the wealthy from the poor, nor the possession by the few of the product of the labor of the many, because all this is founded only on the possibility or the threat of *killing*.

So it would be if the command, "Thou shalt not kill," were recognized as the only law of God. But when the commandments about the Sabbath day, about not taking God's name, and others, were accepted as equally important and on a par with this law, then naturally yet more new priestly ordinances arose, also recognized as equally binding, — and God's greatest Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," which altered man's whole life, was drowned among them, and not only ceased to be always obligatory, — cases were even found when one could act in complete contradiction to it; so that to the present day this law has not received its proper significance.

The same thing happened also with the law of reciprocity.

So that the chief evil from which men suffer ceased long ago to consist in their ignorance of the true law of God, but in people to whom the knowledge and observance of the true law is disadvantageous, but who are

unable to destroy or refute it, inventing "precept upon precept" and "line upon line," as Isaiah says, and giving them out as equally binding or even more obligatory than the *true* laws of God. And therefore all that is now necessary for the deliverance of men from their sufferings is that they should emancipate themselves from all theological, State, and scientific superstitions, propounded as obligatory laws of life, and having thus liberated themselves, should naturally recognize as more binding for themselves than all other regulations and laws, that true, eternal law of God already known, which gives not to some only, but to all men everywhere, the greatest possible welfare in social life.

VI

"BUT," some will say, "however just this law of 'not doing to others' may be, it cannot be adapted by itself to every circumstance of life. If men were to recognize this law as always obligatory, without exception, they would have to acknowledge the use of any kind of violence between men as unlawful, for no man desires to undergo violence himself. And without the exercise of violence on some people the safety of the individual cannot be assured, property cannot be protected, one's country cannot be defended, the existing order cannot be maintained."

God says to men, "In order that it should be well for all of you, everywhere and always, observe my law of not doing to others what you do not wish them to do to you."

But men, who have organized a certain system, in the year 1901, in England, Germany, France, Russia, say, "Perhaps things may become worse if we fulfil this law of God given us for our welfare."

We accept a law invented by a group of men, however strange it may be and however bad may be the men who invented it, and we are not afraid of fulfilling it. But a law in accordance not only with reason and

conscience, but explicitly expressed in a book which we regard as the revelation of God, we are afraid of fulfilling this, for fear evil may come of it or disorder ensue.

Is it not evident that people who speak and think thus, speak not of order but of disorder, the disorder in which they live and find profitable?

Order, according to their idea, is a position which enables them to devour the lives of other men, — while disorder occurs when those devoured desire that their destroyers shall cease to devour them.

Such arguments only demonstrate that the dominating minority feel, in most cases unconsciously, that the recognition of the law of reciprocity would not only destroy their advantageous social position, but would reveal all their immorality and cruelty.

These men cannot argue otherwise.

But for the workmen turned off the land, crushed by taxes, forced into the penal labor of factories, transformed into slaves, into soldiers who torture themselves and their brothers, — for them it is time they understood that only faith in the law of God and its observance will deliver them from their sufferings.

The non-observance of this law, and consequently their continually increasing calamities, propel them toward this. It is time the laborers should feel that their salvation is in this alone; that they need only begin to observe this law of reciprocity for their position to improve immediately — to improve just in the degree to which the number of men increase who act with others as they desire others to act with them.

And these are not mere words, not an abstraction like the Church, State, Socialistic, Scientific theories, but an effective means of deliverance.

Theological, State, and Scientific theories and promises offer welfare to the workmen, some in the next world, some in this, but always in a distant future, when the bones of those who live and suffer now are rotten; whereas the law of reciprocity improves the position of the workers at the present moment and without doubt.

Even if all workers did not clearly see that by working on the lands and in the factories of capitalists they afford them the possibility of profiting by the product of the labor of their own brothers, and that therefore by thus working they break the law of reciprocity, or, if, seeing this, they, owing to their wants, had not the power of refusing such work, — still the abstinence from such work even of only a few would, by rendering the position of the capitalists more difficult, immediately ameliorate the position of the rest. And the abstinence from direct participation in the activities of capital and government in the capacities of overseers, clerks, tax-collectors, customs officials, etc. (obviously contrary to the law of reciprocity), would still more ameliorate the position of the workmen, even if all were not capable of refraining from such activities. And further still, the refusal of the workmen to participate in the army (which has murder for its object, the act most contrary to the law of reciprocity), — which nowadays is more and more often directed against the workmen themselves, — would altogether alter for the better the position of the workers.

VII

THE law of God *is* the law of God not because, as the priests always affirm about their laws, it has been communicated in a miraculous way by God Himself, but because it unmistakably and obviously directs men to that way advancing along which they unquestionably are delivered from their sufferings, and unquestionably obtain the greatest inner (spiritual) and external (physical) welfare, — not some few particularly chosen men, but all men without exception.

Such is the law of God about acting towards others as one wishes that others should act toward oneself. It shows that men fulfilling it unquestionably obtain inner spiritual welfare, in the consciousness of their harmony with the will of God, and of the increase of love in themselves and in others; and that at the same time

they obtain in social life the greatest possible welfare accessible to them. Whereas divergence from this law entails aggravation of their position.

And, as a matter of fact, to any one who does not participate in the mutual struggle between men, but observes life from without, it is evident that the struggling parties act exactly in the same way as gamblers, who surrender a certain though meagre property for the very doubtful possibility of increasing it.

Whether a workman who has lowered the price of his comrades' labor, or has accepted the service of the wealthy, or has entered the army, will better his position, is as doubtful as the success of the gambler. There may be a thousand events owing to which his position will remain the same or become even worse than before. This fact, however, is certain, that his consent to work cheaper or to serve the capitalists and the Government will aggravate, to some extent at all events, the position of all the workers, and his own together with theirs, — as certain as the fact that the gambler loses control over the sum he stakes.

To him who does not participate in the struggle but observes life, it is evident that, as in games of hazard, lotteries, Stock Exchange operations, only the owners of the gambling houses, the lotteries, the stockbrokers' offices, make their fortunes, whereas all those who gamble are ruined. So also in life: it is only the Governments, the wealthy, in general the oppressors, who stand to win; whereas those workers who in the hope of improving their position diverge from the law of reciprocity only aggravate the position of all workers, and therefore also their own.

The law of God *is* the law of God for this reason, that it defines the position of man in the world, showing him the "best" which he can do for his spiritual as well as for his physical life while in this position.

"Be not anxious," it is said in the Gospel, in explanation of this law; "Be not anxious, saying, What shall we eat or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . Your heavenly Father knoweth that

ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

And these are not mere words, but the explanation of the true position of man in the world.

If man only fulfils what God requires of him, if he observes His law, then God also will do for him that which he requires. So that the law of doing to others as one would wish to be done to oneself relates to God also.

In order that He should do for us what we desire, we must do for Him what He desires of us. And He desires of us that we should act with others as we would wish others to act with us. The only difference is that what He desires of us is needful, not for Him, but for ourselves, yielding the highest welfare accessible to us.

VII

THE workmen must cleanse themselves in order that the Governments and wealthy shall cease to devour their lives. Impurity breeds only in dirt, and it feeds on strange bodies only while they are unclean. And therefore for the deliverance of the workers from their calamities there is only one means—that of purifying themselves. And to purify themselves it is necessary that they should be liberated from theological, State, and scientific superstitions, and have faith in God and His law.

In this lies the only means of deliverance.

One meets, at the present time, either an educated or an ordinary, almost illiterate, workman. Both are filled with indignation against the existing order of things. The educated workman believes neither in God nor His law, but he knows Marx, Lassalle, and follows the activities of Bebel, Jaures, in Parliaments, and he delivers stirring orations about the injustice of the seizure of the land and the implements of labor, of transference of property by inheritance, etc.; the uneducated

workman, although he does not know these theories, and believes in the Trinity, the Redemption, etc., is equally indignant with the landlords and capitalists, and regards the whole existing organization as wrong. And yet, give this workman, either the educated or uneducated one, the possibility of bettering his position by producing certain articles cheaper than others, although it may ruin scores, hundreds, thousands, of his comrades, or the possibility of entering the service of the capitalists in a position which gives him a greater salary, or of buying land, or organizing a business himself with hired labor, — and nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand will do it without scruple, and defend their possession of the land or their privileges as employers often even more strenuously than born landlords and capitalists.

As to their participation in murder (that is, in military service, or in taxes destined to the support of troops), an act not only morally wrong but most pernicious to their comrades and themselves, the very act which forms the basis of their slavery — about this none of them trouble, and all consent either to pay the taxes for the army or to become soldiers themselves, regarding such actions as quite normal.

Is it possible that out of such men any society can be formed other than the one which now exists?

The workmen lay the blame of their position on the avarice and cruelty of the landowners, capitalists, coercionists; but all or almost all the workmen, without faith in God and His law, are similarly, only on a smaller and unsuccessful scale, landowners, capitalists, and coercionists.

A country lad in need of a livelihood comes up to town to a friend who has a place as a coachman in the house of a wealthy merchant, and begs him to find him a berth at wages lower than those current. The country lad is ready to accept such a situation, but, coming next morning, he casually overhears in the servants' room the complaint of an old man who has lost his situation and is at a loss to know how to live. The lad is

sorry for the old man and he relinquishes his berth, not wishing to act to another man as he does not wish to be done to. Or else a peasant with a large family accepts the well-paid position of steward to a rich and exacting landowner. The new steward, feeling his family now provided for, is glad of the situation; but on entering his duties he has immediately to enforce fines on the peasants for horses which have strayed in the gentleman's fields; he has to catch women collecting dead branches for their fires in the landowner's woods; he has to reduce the wages of the workmen and to compel them to labor to the utmost verge of their strength. And the steward feels that his conscience does not allow him to do these things. He refuses, and notwithstanding the complaints and reproaches of his family, he gives up his situation and occupies himself with something else which yields him much less. Or else again a soldier has been brought with his company against workmen in revolt and told to fire at them. He refuses to obey, and for this endures cruel suffering. All these men act thus because the evil they are doing to others is evident to them, and their heart clearly tells them that this which they are doing is contrary to the law of God, that one should not do to others as one does not wish others to act to oneself. But if a workman beating down the price of certain work does not see those whom he thereby injures, the evil he thus causes to his comrades does not therefore diminish. And if a workman passes over to the side of the employers and neither sees nor feels the injury he is causing his comrades, the injury still remains. It is the same with a man who enters the military service and prepares to kill his brothers if necessary. If he does not yet see, when entering the service, whom and where he will kill when he learns to shoot and to stab, he can at any rate understand that shooting and stabbing will be his work.

And therefore, in order that the workmen should free themselves from their oppression and bondage, they must educate in themselves the religious feeling which prohibits all that aggravates the general condition of

their brothers, even when this aggravation is not apparent. They must religiously refrain (as people now refrain from eating pork, eating meat during fasts, from work on Sundays, and so forth), firstly, from working for capitalists if they can possibly live without; secondly, from offering their work at a lower rate than that current; thirdly, from improving their position by passing over to the side of the capitalists and serving their interests; and fourthly and chiefly, from participating in Government coercion, be it police, custom-house, or military service.

Only by such a religious attitude toward the form of their activity can the workmen liberate themselves from their oppression.

If the workman for gain or from fear is ready to enter the ranks of organized murderers, — soldiers, — without his conscience rebuking him, if for the increase of his welfare he is ready deliberately to deprive his more needy comrade of his earnings, or for the sake of salary to pass over to the side of the oppressors, helping them in their activity, he has nothing to complain of.

Whatever his position he makes it himself, and he himself cannot be other than one of the oppressed or one of the oppressors.

And this cannot be otherwise. Without belief in God and His law man cannot but desire to procure for himself in his short life the greatest amount of welfare, whatever consequences this may entail for others. And as soon as people desire, each one for himself, the greatest possible welfare, independently of the consequences to others, then inevitably, whatever the organization introduced, such men will form a heap with a pointed top, a pyramid, — at the apex the rulers, and underneath them the oppressed.

IX

It is said in the Gospels that Jesus pitied men for their exhaustion and dispersion "like sheep without a shepherd."

What would he have felt and said to-day, seeing men not only exhausted and dispersed like sheep without a shepherd, but millions of men all over the world, generation after generation, ruining themselves in brutish labor, stultified, unenlightened, in the power of vice, killing, torturing each other, — notwithstanding that the means of deliverance from all these calamities was given them two thousand years ago?

The key to the lock of the chain forged around the working people has been placed by their side, and they need only take this key and unlock the chain to become free. But the working-men as yet do not do this, but either undertake nothing and yield themselves to despair; or else struggle and break their bones in the hope of forcibly sundering the unbreakable chain; or else, which is even worse, acting like a captive animal when it rushes at the one who tries to free it, they attack those who indicate the key which would open the lock on their chain.

This key is faith in God and His law.

Only when men throw off those superstitions in which they are deliberately trained, when they believe that the law of doing to others what one desires others to do to oneself is the most important divine law of our time, and believe this as firmly as some now believe in keeping the Sabbath, others in fasting, liturgies, sacraments, and others in the repetition of prayers, or the observance of oaths, and so forth; and when, having thus believed, they fulfil this law in preference to all other laws and ordinances, — only then will the slavery and distressed condition of the workmen be abolished.

And therefore it is necessary that the workmen themselves should first of all, without sparing old habits and traditions, and without fearing external persecution from Church and State, or internal strife with one's relatives, — boldly and deliberately free themselves from the false faiths in which they have been educated, shall more and more make clear to themselves and others, and especially to the young generations and to children, the essence of faith in God and of the consequent law of

reciprocity, and shall follow this law to their utmost strength although it involve temporary disadvantages. Thus the workmen themselves should act.

As to the ruling minority, who, profiting by the labor of the workmen, have acquired all the advantages of education, and therefore can clearly discern the deceits in which the laborers are kept—as to these, if they do indeed desire to serve the working people, they should first of all, both by example and by word, endeavor to free them from those religious and State deceits in which they are entangled, and not act as they now do: that is, while sparing, supporting, and even strengthening by their example these deceits, especially the chief religious ones, offer ineffective and even pernicious remedies, which not only fail to liberate the workmen from their calamities, but even more and more aggravate their position.

When, where, and how this will be accomplished no one can say. One thing only is certain—that this means alone can free the enormous majority of mankind—all the laborers—from their humiliations and sufferings.

There are no other means, nor can there be.

MY REPLY TO THE SYNOD'S EDICT EXCOMMUNICATING ME ON FEB- RUARY 20-22, AND TO LETTERS CONCERNING IT

(April 4, 1901)

"He who begins by loving Christianity better than Truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or Church better than Christianity, and end by loving himself better than all." — COLERIDGE.

I DID not at first intend answering the Edict of the Synod concerning me, but it has called forth many letters from unknown correspondents, of whom some abuse me for denying what I do not deny, others exhort me to believe in what I have never ceased to believe, and others, again, express a fellowship with me that can hardly really exist, and a sympathy to which I hardly have a right. So I have decided to answer both the Edict itself, showing what is unjust in it, and the letters from these unknown correspondents.

The Edict in general has many faults. It is either illegal, or else intentionally ambiguous; it is arbitrary, groundless, and untruthful, and, besides, contains libels, and incitements to evil feelings and actions.

It is either illegal or intentionally ambiguous because, if intended to be an excommunication from the Church, it does not fulfil those Church regulations according to which such excommunications can alone be pronounced; if, on the other hand, it is a declaration that he who does not believe in the Church and its dogmas does not belong to it, the statement goes without saying, and such a declaration can have no other object than that it should appear as an excommunication, without in reality being such; and this, as a matter of fact, is what has happened, the Edict having been understood in this light.

It is arbitrary, because it accuses me alone of unbelief in all the enumerated points, whereas not only many, but almost all educated people share this unbelief, and constantly have expressed, and do express it in conversation, in letters, in pamphlets, and in books.

It is groundless, because the chief reason which is put forward for its announcement is the great circulation of my seductive false teachings, whereas I am well aware that there are in Russia hardly a hundred individuals who share my views, and that the circulation of my writings about religion is so insignificant, owing to the censorship, that the majority of those who have read the Synod's Edict have not the slightest idea of what I have written about religion, as is evident from the letters I have received.

It contains glaring untruth in its statement that the Church has made unsuccessful efforts to convince me of my errors. Nothing of the kind has ever been done.

It constitutes what in legal terminology is called a libel, as it contains intentionally unjust assertions tending to cause me injury.

Lastly, it is an incitement to evil feelings and actions, for it has called forth, as one might expect, spite and hatred toward me from unenlightened and unreasoning people, reaching even to threats of assassination in the letters I have received. "Now thou art given up to an anathema, and wilt after death go to eternal suffering, and wilt die like a dog . . . anathema, thou old devil . . . be cursed," writes one. Another rebukes the Government for not having yet incarcerated me in a monastery, and fills his letter with invective. A third writes: "If the Government will not remove thee, we will ourselves render thee silent." This letter concludes with maledictions: "I will find means to destroy thee, thou villain. . . ." Then follow indecent abuses. I remarked symptoms of a similar spitefulness when meeting some people after the Synod's Edict. On the very day when the Edict was published, while walking in the streets I heard the words, "Here is the devil in man's image," and if the crowd had been differently com-

posed it is very possible that I should have been beaten as a man was beaten a few years ago in front of the Panteleymon Chapel.

So the Synod's Edict in general is very wicked; and the fact that it concludes with the statement that those who have signed it pray God that I should become like them does not make it better.

In detail the Edict is incorrect in the following: It says that "the well-known writer, Russian by birth, Orthodox by baptism and education, Count Tolstor, seduced by the pride of his intellect, has audaciously revolted against the Lord and His Christ and against His holy household, and has openly and publicly renounced the Orthodox Mother Church which has reared and educated him."

That I have renounced the Church which calls itself Orthodox is quite correct.

But I have renounced it not because I have revolted against the Lord; but, on the contrary, only because I desired to serve Him with all the powers of my soul. Before renouncing the Church and that unity with the people which was unspeakably dear to me, I had devoted several years to the study of the Church doctrine, both theoretical and practical, the truth of which for certain reasons I had begun to doubt. For the theory, I read all that I could upon the doctrine of the Church, and studied and critically analyzed its dogmatic theology; practically, I strictly followed, during more than a year, all the prescriptions of the Church, keeping all its fasts and attending all its services. Then I became convinced that the teaching of the Church is theoretically a crafty and pernicious deceit, whilst practically it is a collection of the grossest superstitions and sorcery completely concealing the whole meaning of the Christian teaching. (It is sufficient to read the Prayer Book, and to observe those ceremonies which are incessantly being carried on by Orthodox priesthood and regarded as Christian worship, to see that all these rites are nothing but various methods of sorcery adapted to all possible occasions in life. In order that a child which has died should

go to Paradise, it must be rubbed with oil and bathed to the utterance of certain words; before a woman after childbirth can cease to be unclean, certain conjurations must be recited; to insure success in business or peaceful life in a new house, a good harvest, the termination of a drought, the recovery from an illness, to better the condition of a deceased one in the next world — for all this and a thousand other things there exist certain incantations which must be pronounced by a priest at a certain place, and for a certain consideration.)

And I did indeed renounce the Church and cease to fulfil its ceremonies, and expressed in my will that those near to me when I am dying shall not allow any servants of the Church to approach me, and that my dead body shall be removed as soon as possible without undergoing any sorcery or ritual, as any obnoxious and unnecessary thing would be removed to be out of the way of those who are alive.

As to the statement that I “have devoted my literary activity and the talent given me by God to the propagation amongst the people of teachings contrary to Christ and the Church, etc., in writings and letters disseminated in large quantities all over the world by me as well as by my disciples, and that, especially in the precincts of our dear fatherland, I have preached with the enthusiasm of a fanatic the overthrow of all the dogmas of the Church and of the very essence of the Christian teaching” — this is incorrect. I have never troubled myself about the propagation of my teaching. It is true I have for my own self expressed in my writings my understanding of Christ’s teaching, and have not concealed these works from those who wished to become acquainted with them; but I have never published them myself, and I have communicated to others what I understand by Christ’s teaching only when I have been asked to do so. In such cases I have stated what I think, and have given my books if I had them.

It is further said that I “repudiate God worshiped

in the Holy Trinity as Creator and Guardian of the universe, that I renounce the Lord Jesus Christ, God-man Redeemer and Saviour of the world, Who has suffered for the sake of us men and our salvation, and risen from the dead, that I repudiate the immaculate conception of Christ the Lord and virginity of Mary before and after His birth." That I repudiate the incomprehensible Trinity and the fable about the fall of the first man, which has no meaning at the present time, the sacrilegious story about a God born of a Virgin and redeeming the human race—this is quite true. But God—a Spirit, God—Love, the only God, Source of all—I not only do not repudiate, I recognize nothing else as really existing except God; and the whole meaning of life I see only in the fulfilment of the Will of God as expressed in the Christian teaching.

It is again said: "He does not recognize future life and retribution." If one understands future life in the sense of the Second Advent, of hell with its eternal torments and devils, and of Paradise with its eternal bliss, then it is perfectly correct that I do not recognize such a future life. But eternal life and retribution here and everywhere, now and always, I recognize to such an extent that, standing as I am at my age on the border of the grave, I often have to exert an effort not to desire bodily death, *i.e.*, birth to a new life. And I believe that every righteous act increases the true welfare of my eternal life, and that every evil act diminishes that welfare.

It is also said that I repudiate the Sacraments. This is quite true. I regard all Sacraments as a base and gross sorcery which does not correspond to the idea of God and of the Christian teaching, and, moreover, as an infringement of the most direct injunctions of the Gospel. In the baptism of infants I see a palpable distortion of the meaning which might have been attached to the baptism of adults when they consciously accepted Christianity; in the fulfilment of the marriage ritual in relation to people

who had previously contracted other sexual unions, and in the admission of divorce and the consecration of marriages after divorce, I see the direct infringement of the spirit and the letter of the Gospel teaching. In the periodical remission of sins at confession, I see a pernicious deceit, which only encourages immorality and destroys the fear of committing sin. In anointing with oil, in the worship of *ikons* and relics, and in all those ceremonies, prayers, and incantations with which the Prayer Book is filled, I see the methods of gross enchantment.

In the communion, I see the deification of the flesh and the distortion of the Christian teaching. In ordination, besides an evident preparation for deceit, I see a direct contradiction of Christ's words, which positively forbid calling any one "teacher, father, or master" (Matt. xxiii. 8-10).

Finally, it is said, as the last and highest degree of my culpability, that I reviled the most "sacred objects of belief, and did not shudder at submitting to mockery the most sacred of all Sacraments, the Eucharist." That I did not shudder at describing simply and objectively that which the priest does when preparing this so-called sacrament is quite correct. But that this so-called sacrament is something sacred, and that to describe it simply as it takes place is blasphemy, this is quite incorrect. Blasphemy consists not in calling a screen a screen instead of iconostasis, and a cup a cup instead of chalice, etc. But the most terribly incessant, revolting blasphemy consists in people profiting by all possible means of deceit and hypnotization to induce children and simple-minded people to believe that if one cuts up little bits of bread in a certain way, pronouncing certain words, and puts them into wine, that God enters into these pieces; that he in whose name a piece will be taken out will recover, or if he be dead, his position in the next world will be bettered; and that into him who will eat such a piece God Himself will enter.

Why, it is this which is terrible.

However one may understand the personality of

Christ, that teaching of his which destroys the evil of the world, is so simple, so easy, which so undoubtedly gives welfare to men if only it be not distorted by them, this teaching is completely concealed, completely altered into the gross magic of bathing, rubbing with oil, bodily gestures, enchantments, the swallowing of bits of bread, and so forth; so that of the teaching nothing has been left, and if one ever attempts to remind people that the teachings of Christ consist not in these sorceries, Te Deums, Masses, candles, *ikons*, but in men loving one another, not returning evil for evil, not judging, not killing each other—then the wrath of those to whom this deceit is advantageous is excited, and these men publicly, with inconceivable arrogance, declare in churches, publish in books, newspapers, catechisms, that Christ never forbade oaths, never forbade murder (executions, wars), that the teaching of non-resistance to evil has been with Satanic slyness invented by the enemies of Christ.¹

It is terrible, above all, that people to whom this is advantageous deceive not only those who are grown up, but, having the power to do so, children also, those very children about whom Christ said, "Woe to him that shall deceive them." It is terrible that these men, for the sake of their petty advantages, commit this frightful evil and conceal from men the truth which was revealed by Christ, and gives welfare—such welfare as cannot be compensated even in a thousandth degree by the advantage they receive from this. They are like the robber who murders a whole family of five or six persons to carry away with him an old coat and a shilling's worth of coppers. All the clothes and money would be willingly surrendered if only he did not murder them: but he cannot act otherwise. So also with the religious deceivers. One could maintain them ten times better in the greatest possible luxury if only they would cease to cause men to perish by their deceit. But they cannot act otherwise. This it is which is ter-

¹ Speech by Ambrosius, Bishop of Harkov.

rible, and therefore it is not only permissible but obligatory on one to reveal their deceit. If there be anything sacred, it certainly is not that which they call sacraments, but precisely this duty of exposing their religious deceit when one sees it.

If a savage rub his idol with cream, or beat it, I may pass by indifferently without offending his belief, because he does this in the name of his superstition, which is strange to me, and does not concern what I consider sacred; but when men by their wild superstition, however many of them there may be, however old may be the superstition, and however powerful they may be—in the name of that God by whom I live, and that teaching of Christ which has given me life and can give it to all men—when they preach gross sorcery, I cannot remain an indifferent witness. And if I call what they are doing by its name, I only fulfil that which I should, which I cannot refrain from if I believe in God and the Christian teaching. And if they call this disclosure of their deceit blasphemy, it only proves the power of the deceit, and should only increase the efforts of those who believe in God and in the teaching of Christ, to destroy the deceit which conceals from men the true God.

Concerning Christ, who drove the oxen, sheep, and merchants out of the Temple, it was inevitable that men should say he was a blasphemer. If he were to come now and to see what is being done in his name in the Church, he would certainly, with yet greater and lawful anger, throw away all these dreadful robes and apparels and crosses and chalices and candles and *ikons*, and all those things by the means of which they accomplish their magic and conceal God and His teaching from man.

So this is what is correct and incorrect in the Edict of the Synod concerning me. I do not indeed believe in what they say they believe in. But I do believe in much of what they wish to persuade people I do not believe in.

I believe in this: I believe in God, whom I compre-

hend as Spirit, as Love, as the Source of all. I believe that He is in me and I in Him. I believe that the Will of God is the most clearly and comprehensively expressed in the teaching of the man Christ, — to regard whom as God, and to pray to whom, I deem the greatest sacrilege. I believe that the true welfare of man lies in the fulfilment of the Will of God; and that His will consists in men loving each other, and therefore behaving toward others as they desire that others should behave with them; as it is said in the Gospels, “in this is contained all the law and the prophets.” I believe that the meaning of the life of every man, therefore, lies only in the increase of love in himself; that this increase of love leads the individual man in this life toward greater and greater welfare; that after death it gives the greater welfare the more love there be in the man; and that, at the same time, more than anything else, it contributes to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, *i.e.*, to an order of life where the discord, deceit, and violence which now reign will be replaced by free agreement, truth, and brotherly love between men. I believe that for the development of Love there is but one means — prayer, not public prayer in churches, which was expressly forbidden by Christ (Matt. vi. 5-13); but that prayer an example of which is given by Christ, solitary prayer consisting in the reestablishment and strengthening in one’s consciousness of the meaning of one’s life and of one’s dependence solely upon the Will of God.

Whether these, my beliefs, do or do not offend, grieve, or perplex any one, whether they hinder anything or displease any one — I am as little able to alter them as I am to alter my body. I have to live alone, and I have to die alone (and that very soon), and therefore I cannot possibly believe otherwise than as I do, preparing to go to that God from whom I have come. I do not say that my belief is the only undoubtedly true one for all times, but I do not see any other more simple, clear, and answering all the demands of my mind and heart. Were I to learn a better, I would immediately

accept it, because God requires nothing but the truth. But to return to that from which I have just escaped with such sufferings, I decidedly cannot, as a flying bird cannot return into the eggshell from which it has come.

Coleridge has said : " He who begins by loving Christianity better than Truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or Church better than Christianity, and end by loving himself " (his own peace) " better than all."

I have advanced in the opposite way. I began by loving my Orthodox faith more than my peace ; then I loved Christianity more than my Church ; and now I love the Truth more than anything in the world. And until now the Truth coincides for me with Christianity as I understand it ; and I profess this Christianity, and in that measure in which I do profess it I peacefully and joyously live and peacefully and joyously am approaching death.

“THOU SHALT NOT KILL”

ON THE DEATH OF KING HUMBERT

(*September, 1900*)

“Thou shalt do no murder.” — EX. xx. 13.

“The disciple is not above his master: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his master.” — LUKE vi. 40.

“For all they that take up the sword shall perish with the sword.” — MATT. xxvi. 52.

“All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them.” — MATT. vii. 12.

WHEN kings are tried and executed like Charles I., Louis XVI., and Maximilian of Mexico; or killed in a palace conspiracy like Peter III., Paul, and all kinds of Sultans, Shahs, and Khans, the event is generally passed over in silence. But when one of them is killed without a trial, and not by a palace conspiracy; like Henry IV., Alexander II., Carnot, the Empress of Austria, the Shah of Persia, and, recently, King Humbert, then such murder causes great surprise and indignation among Kings and Emperors, and those attached to them, as if they were the great enemies of murder, as if they never profited by murder, never took part in it, and never gave orders to commit it. And yet the kindest of these murdered Kings, such as Alexander II. or Humbert, were guilty of the murder of tens of thousands of persons killed on the battle-field, not to mention those executed at home; while hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of people have been killed, hanged, beaten to death, or shot, by the more cruel Kings and Emperors.

Christ's teaching cancels the law “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”; but those men who have kept to the older law and still keep to it, who act upon it by

punishing and carrying on wars, and who not only act on the law “an eye for an eye,” but give orders to kill thousands without any provocation, by declaring war, — *they* have no right to be indignant when the same law is applied to themselves in so infinitesimal a measure that hardly one King or Emperor gets killed to a hundred thousand, or perhaps to a million ordinary people killed by the order, or with the consent, of Kings and Emperors.

Kings and Emperors should not be indignant when such murders as that of Alexander II. or Humbert occur, but should, on the contrary, be surprised that such murders are so rare, considering the continual and universal example of committing murders they themselves set the people.

Kings and Emperors are surprised and horrified when one of themselves is murdered, and yet the whole of their activity consists in managing murder and preparing for murder. The keeping up, the teaching and exercising, of armies with which Kings and Emperors are always so much occupied, and of which they are the organizers, — what is it but preparation for murder?

The masses are so hypnotized that, though they see what is continually going on around them, they do not understand what it means. They see the unceasing care Kings, Emperors, and Presidents bestow on disciplined armies, see the parades, reviews, and manœuvres they hold, and of which they boast to one another, and the people eagerly crowd to see how their own brothers, dressed up in bright-colored, glittering clothes, are turned into machines to the sound of drums and trumpets, and, obedient to the shouting of one man, all make the same movements; and they do not understand the meaning of it all.

Yet the meaning of such drilling is very clear and simple. It is preparing for murder. It means the stupefying of men in order to convert them into instruments for murdering.

And it is just Kings and Emperors and Presidents who do it, and organize it, and pride themselves on it.

And it is these same people whose special employment is murder-organizing, who have made murder their profession, who dress in military uniforms, and carry weapons (swords at their side), who are horror-struck and indignant when one of themselves is killed.

It is not because such murders as the recent murder of Humbert are exceptionally cruel that they are so terrible. Things done by the order of Kings and Emperors, not only in the days of old, such as the massacre of St. Bartholomew, persecutions for faith, terrible ways of putting down peasant riots, but also the present executions, the torture of solitary cells and disciplinary battalions, hanging, decapitation, shooting, and slaughter at the wars, are incomparably more cruel than the murders committed by Anarchists.

Nor is it on account of their injustice that these murders are terrible. If Alexander and Humbert did not deserve death, the thousands of Russians who perished at Plevna, and of Italians who perished in Abyssinia, deserved it still less. No, it is not because of their cruelty and injustice these murders are terrible, but because of the want of reason in those who perpetrate them.

If the regicides commit murder under the influence of feelings of indignation evoked by witnessing the sufferings of the enslaved people, for which sufferings they hold Alexander II., Carnot, or Humbert responsible, or because they are influenced by personal desire for revenge, — however immoral such conduct may be, still it is comprehensible; but how can an organized body of Anarchists such as those by whom, it is said, Bréssi was sent out, and by whom another Emperor was threatened, how can it, quietly considering means of improving the condition of the people, find nothing better to do than to murder people, the killing of whom is as useful as cutting off one of the Hydra's heads?

Kings and Emperors have long established a system resembling the mechanism of a magazine rifle, *i.e.*, as soon as one bullet flies out another takes its place. "*Le roi est mort — vive le roi !*" Then what is the use of killing them? It is only from a most

superficial point of view that the murder of such persons can seem a means of saving the people from oppression and wars, which destroy their lives.

We need only remember that the same kind of oppression and war went on no matter who stood at the head of the Government: Nicholas or Alexander, Louis or Napoleon, Frederic or William, Palmerston or Gladstone, McKinley or any one else, in order to see that it is not some definite person who causes the oppression and the wars from which people suffer.

The misery of the people is not caused by individuals, but by an order of Society by which they are bound together in a way that puts them in the power of a few, or, more often, of one man: a man so depraved by his unnatural position, — having the fate and lives of millions of people in his power, — that he is always in an unhealthy state and suffering more or less from a mania of self-aggrandizement, which is not noticed in him only because of his exceptional position.

Apart from the fact that such men are surrounded, from the cradle to the grave, by the most insane luxury and its usual accompaniment of flattery and servility, the whole of their education, and all their occupations, are centered on the one object of murder, the study of murder in the past, the best means of murdering in the present, the best ways of preparing for murder in the future. From their earliest years they learn the art of murder in all possible forms, always carry about with them instruments of murder, dress in different uniforms, attend parades, manœuvres, and reviews, visit each other, present orders and the command of regiments to each other. And yet not only does nobody tell them the real name of their actions, not only does nobody tell them that preparing for murder is revolting and criminal, but they hear nothing but praise and words of admiration from all around them for these actions.

The only part of the Press that reaches them, and which seems to them to be the expression of the feel-

ings of the best of the people or their best representatives, exalts all their words and deeds, however silly and wicked they may be, in the most servile manner. All who surround them, men and women, cleric or lay, all these people who do not value human dignity, vie with each other in flattering them in the most refined manner, agree with them in everything, and deceive them continually, making it impossible for them to know life as it is. These men might live to be a hundred and never see a real, free man, and never hear the truth.

We are sometimes appalled by the words and deeds of these men, but if we only consider their state we cannot but see that any man would act in the same way in such a position. A reasonable man can do but one thing in such a position, *i.e.*, leave it. Every one who remains in such a position will act in the same manner.

What, indeed, must be going on in the head of some William of Germany, a man of limited understanding, little education, and with a great deal of ambition, whose ideals are like those of a German "junker," when any silly or horrid thing he may say is always met with an enthusiastic "*Hoch!*" and commented on, as if it were something very important, by the Press of the whole world? He says that the soldiers should be prepared to kill their own fathers in obedience to his command. The answer is "Hurrah!" He says the Gospels must be introduced with a fist of iron. "Hurrah!" He says that the Army must not take any prisoners in China, but kill all, and he is not placed in a lunatic asylum, but they cry "Hurrah!" and set sail for China to execute his orders.

Or Nicholas, who, though naturally modest, begins his reign by declaring to venerable old men, in answer to the desire they express of being allowed to discuss their own affairs, that their hope for self-government is a senseless dream. And the organs of the Press that reach him, and the people whom he meets, praise him for it. He proposes a childish, silly, and untruthful

project of universal peace at the same time that he is ordering an increase of the Army, and even then there are no limits to the laudations of his wisdom and his virtue. Without any reason, he senselessly and pitilessly offends the whole of the Finnish nation, and again hears nothing but praise. At last he enters upon the Chinese slaughter, terrible by its injustice, cruelty, and its contrast with his project of peace; and he gets applauded simultaneously from all sides, both for his own conquests and for his adherence to his father's policy of peace. What must indeed be going on in the heads and hearts of such men?

So that it is not Alexanders and Humberts, Williams, Nicholases, and Chamberlains, who are the cause of oppression and war, even though they do organize them, but it is those who have placed them in, and support them in, a position in which they have power over the life and death of men.

Therefore it is not necessary to kill Alexanders and Nicholases, Williams and Humberts, but only to leave off supporting the social condition of which they are the product. It is the selfishness and stupefaction of the people who sell their freedom and their honor for insignificant material advantages, which supports the present state of society.

Those who stand on the lowest rung of the ladder, partly as a consequence of being stupefied by a patriotic and pseudo-religious education, partly for the sake of personal advantages, give up their freedom and their feeling of human dignity to those who stand higher, and who offer them material advantages. In a like position are those standing a little higher. They, too, through being stupefied, and especially for material advantages, give up their freedom and sense of human dignity. The same is true of those standing still higher; and so it continues up to the highest rungs, up to the person or persons who, standing on the very summit of the social cone, have no one to submit to, nor anywhere to rise to, and have no motive for action except ambition and love of power. These are generally

so depraved and stupefied by their insane power over life and death, and by the flattery and servility of those around them, which is connected with such power, that while doing evil they feel convinced they are the benefactors of the human race. It is the people themselves who, by sacrificing their human dignity for material profits, produce these men, and are afterwards angry with them for their stupid and cruel acts; murdering such people is like whipping children after spoiling them.

Very little seems needed to stop oppression and useless war, and to prevent any one from being indignant with those who seem to be the cause of such oppression and war.

Only that things should be called by their right names and seen as they are; that it should be understood that an army is an instrument of murder, that the recruiting and drilling of armies which Kings, Emperors, and Presidents carry on with so much self-assurance are preparations for murder.

If only every King, Emperor, and President would understand that his work of organizing armies is not an honorable and important duty, as his flatterers persuade him it is, but a most abominable business, *i.e.*, the preparing for, and the managing of, murder. If only every private individual understood that the payment of taxes which helps to equip soldiers, and above all, military service, are not immaterial but highly immoral actions, by which he not only permits murder, but takes part in it himself — then this power of the Kings and Emperors which arouses indignation, and causes them to be killed, would come to an end of itself.

And so the Alexanders, Carnots, Humberts, and others should not be killed, but it ought to be shown them that they are murderers; and above all, they should not be allowed to kill men; their orders to murder should not be obeyed.

If men do not yet act in this manner, it is only because Governments, to maintain themselves, diligently exercise a hypnotic influence upon the people. There-

fore we can help to prevent people killing Kings and each other, not by murder, — murders only strengthen this hypnotic state, — but by arousing men from the delusion in which they are held.

And it is this that I have tried to do in these remarks.

HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE?

(December, 1898)

I

A BOY is born in the country. Laboring always with his father, his grandfather, his mother, he sees each year the finest crops from the fields he and his father have plowed, harrowed, and sowed—the fields that his mother and sister have mowed and reaped, binding the corn into the sheaves which he himself has helped to stack—he sees always that his father carries the best of these crops, not to his own house, but to the squire's barn beyond the manor gardens.

As they pass the manor-house with the creaking cart he and his father have piled up, the boy sees on the veranda a richly dressed lady seated at a table spread with a silver kettle, fine china, cakes, and sweets; on the other side of the carriage drive he sees the squire's two sons in shining shoes and embroidered shirts playing ball on the smooth lawn.

The ball is knocked over the cart. "Pick it up, boy," cries one of the young gentlemen.

"Pick it up, Johnny!" shouts the father to his son, taking off his cap and walking by the side of the cart holding the reins.

"What does it mean?" thinks the boy. "I am tired with work while they are playing; yet I must fetch the balls for them!"

But he fetches the ball, and the young gentleman takes it from the coarse sunburnt peasant-boy's hand with fine white fingers and returns to the game without noticing him.

The boy's father has gone on with the cart. The boy runs along the road to catch up with them, kicking up the dust with his clumsy, worn-out boots, and together they reach the barn, which is crowded with carts and sheaves. The bustling overseer, his canvas jacket wet with sweat at the back, and a stick in his hand, greets the boy's father with an oath for driving up to the wrong place. The father apologizes, turns back wearily, lugging at the reins of the exhausted horse, and stops at the further side.

The boy approaches his father, and asks: "Father, why do we bring our corn to him? Haven't we grown it?"

"Because the land is theirs," answers his father, angrily.

"Who gave them the land, then?"

"Go and ask the overseer there. He'll explain it to you. Do you see his stick?"

"But what will they do with this corn?"

"Thrash it and grind it, and then sell it."

"And what will they do with the money?"

"They'll buy those cakes with it that you saw on the table when we passed."

The boy becomes quiet and thoughtful. But he has little time for thought. The men shout to his father to bring his cart nearer. He pulls the horse up to the stacks, climbs to the top of his load, unties the rope, and wearily hands the sheaves up one by one, straining his hernia¹ with each effort, while the boy holds the old mare, whom he has driven for the last two years, brushing away the flies as his father tells him, and wondering, for he cannot understand, why the land does not belong to those who work it, but to those young gentlemen who play about in fancy shirts and drink tea and eat cakes.

The boy thinks about this continually; when waking, when going to sleep, when attending the horses, but

¹ Owing to frequent overstrains, a great number of Russian peasants suffer from chronic hernia. — Tr.

finds no answer. Every one says it is as it should be—and lives accordingly.

So he grows up. He marries. Children are born to him, and they ask the same question, and also wonder; and he answers them as his father answered him.

And they, too, living in poverty and subjection, labor for idle strangers.

So he lives, and so live all around him.

Wherever he goes it is the same; and, according to the stories of the passing pilgrims, it is the same everywhere. Everywhere laborers overwork themselves for idle, rich landlords; suffer from rupture, asthma, consumption; drink in despair; and die before their time. Women overstrain themselves, cooking, washing, mending, tending the cattle; wither, and grow prematurely old, from overpowering and incessant labor.

And everywhere those for whom they work indulge in horses and carriages and pet dogs, conservatories and games, from one year to another; each day from morning till evening dressing as if for a holiday, playing, eating and drinking, as not one of those who work for them could do, even on a holiday.

II

WHY is this?

The first answer that presents itself to the rural laborer is, that it is owing to the land having been taken from him, and given to those who do not work it. So that the working peasant either has no land, or so little that he cannot support himself and his family on it, and must therefore either starve, or rent the land which adjoins his own but is possessed by those who do not work it; to rent it consenting of necessity to whatever terms are demanded.

So it appears at first sight, but, on second thoughts, there are peasants who have land sufficient to support them, and yet they too, all, or part of them, yield themselves to the same slavery.

Again, why is this?

It is because the peasant needs money to buy plows, scythes, horseshoes, and building materials, oil, tea, sugar, wine, rope, salt, matches, tobacco, and clothes; whereas the money he earns by selling his produce is continually being extorted from him in the shape of taxes direct and indirect, and by increasing the prices of the things he purchases, so that the majority of the peasants cannot procure the money they need otherwise than by selling themselves as wage slaves to those who have money.

And this is what the peasants, their wives and children, do. Some sell themselves in their own neighborhood, others sell themselves far away in the towns as servants, coachmen, wet-nurses, maids, attendants, waiters, and especially as factory workers, — whole families thus removing to the towns. Having sold themselves in the towns in these capacities, country folk lose the habits of agricultural work and simplicity of life; they grow accustomed to town food, clothing, and drink, and by these new habits yet further confirm their bondage.

Thus it is not merely want of land which causes the laborer to become enslaved to the rich; the causes are to be found also in the taxes and the high prices charged for the necessities of life, and the luxurious town habits to which country laborers become accustomed when they abandon their villages. The present slavery originated in the land being taken away from the laborers, but it is maintained and increased by taxes, and is confirmed and strengthened by the circumstance that men lose the habit of agricultural labor, and become accustomed to town luxuries which can be obtained only by selling themselves as slaves to those who have money. And this slavery is continually spreading, and affirming, and establishing itself more and more.

In villages men live half famished, in increasing toil and privations — slaves of the landowners.

In towns and factories working-men live generation after generation, physically and morally depraved by

dull, monotonous, unhealthy, and unnatural labor — slaves of the capitalists.

Every year the condition of both classes becomes steadily worse. In the villages peasants are growing more and more destitute as greater numbers leave the country for the factories. In the towns, although the workmen do not get poorer, but, on the contrary, seem to become better off, yet they are growing more and more intemperate, more and more incapable of any other kind of labor than the one they are accustomed to, and are therefore falling more and more into the power of the factory owners.

Thus the power of the landowners and factory owners and of the wealthy classes generally is becoming stronger and stronger, while the condition of the working-men is becoming worse and worse. How can we escape from these conditions, and is any escape possible?

III

It would seem that deliverance from land slavery could be easily effected. The only thing required would be the recognition of a self-evident truth which men would never have doubted if they were not deceived — namely, that every man that is born has the same right to support himself from the land as he has to the air or the sunlight; and that therefore no man has the right to regard any land he does not cultivate as his own, or to prevent others from cultivating it.

But no Government will ever sanction this freedom, for most of the individuals who form Governments are landowners; and on the possession of this property is based their existence. They know this, and hold tight to their privilege, and defend it.

About thirty years ago Henry George suggested not only a reasonable but a perfectly practicable scheme of emancipating the land from private ownership. But neither in America nor in England (in France it is not even spoken of) has this scheme been accepted. Vari-

ous refutations of it have been attempted, but as they failed the idea was simply boycotted.

If this scheme was not accepted either in England or in America, there is even less hope of its being accepted in autocratic States, such as Germany, Austria, and Russia.

In Russia we have vast expanses of land usurped by private individuals, by the Tsar, and the Imperial family, and there is no hope of these people—who without their right to landed property would feel as helpless as fledglings fallen from their nest—relinquishing or permitting any infringement of their right without struggling to their utmost to maintain it.

Therefore, so long as power remains in the hands of Governments composed of landowners, there will be no emancipation of the land.

Deliverance from taxation is as impossible, and even more so. The whole Government, from its head, the Sovereign, down to the last official, lives by taxation. Therefore the suppression of taxes by Governments themselves is as impossible as the destruction of a man's only means of existence by the man himself.

It is true that some Governments are apparently attempting to relieve the people from the burden of general taxation by means of income taxes drawn from the wealthy classes, increasing such taxes as the income grows. But this transference from one class of taxation to another cannot alleviate the condition of the people, because the monied classes, *i.e.*, merchants, landowners, and capitalists, proportionately with the increase of taxation will augment the prices of rents, land, and all necessities of life, and will lower wages, so that the whole weight of taxation will still be borne by the working-classes.

Numbers of measures have been suggested by contemporary scientists for liberating the working-classes from the slavery caused by the capitalistic appropriation of the instruments of production; in consequence of which measures it is believed that the workmen's wages must continually increase, their working hours continu-

ally decrease, and ultimately all instruments of production must pass from the hands of the masters to those of the workers. The workers thus becoming possessed of all factories and workshops will no longer be obliged to surrender a part of their labor to the capitalist, but will receive full exchange for their toil, and all articles of consumption necessary to their life. This plan has been promulgated in England, America, and Germany for the last thirty years, but until now its realization has not been attained, nor is there the slightest approach to its fulfilment. Trades unions and strikes have been organized, by means of which the working-classes sometimes succeed in obtaining higher wages and a reduction of working hours; but as the Governments, bound by the capitalists, do not, and never will, permit the instruments of production to be taken from their present owners, the position remains practically unchanged. And as the men who receive higher pay for less hours increase their requirements, they thus remain in the same slavery.

So it is evident that the slavery of the working-classes will never be abolished while Governments continue: *first*, to maintain landed property in the hands of non-laboring landowners; *second*, to collect direct and indirect taxes; and *third*, to defend and uphold capitalistic property.

IV

“THE slavery of the working-men is caused by the existence of Governments! If this bondage is the result of the Governments, then, for the necessary emancipation, it is indispensable that the existing Governments should be overthrown, and such new ones established as would grant free use of land, the suppression of taxation, and the transference of capital and factories into the hands and management of the workers.”

There are some who proclaim the possibility of such a solution, and prepare for it. But, fortunately (for such action, always connected with violence and mur-

der, is immoral, and detrimental to the end in view, as repeatedly demonstrated in history), such an undertaking is impossible at the present time.

The days are long past when Governments naïvely believed they were ordained for the welfare of the people and took no measure to insure themselves against revolutions (moreover, they had none of the modern means of communication, telegraphs, telephones, railways), and, consequently, were easily overthrown, as in England in 1640, in France during the Great Revolution and after, and in Germany in '48. Since then there has been only one revolution, in 1871, and that under peculiar circumstances.

At the present day, revolutions and the upsetting of Governments are simply impossible. Impossible because Governments, being now aware of their uselessness and perniciousness, and of the fact that no one any longer believes in their sanctity, are guided only by the instinct of self-preservation, and, using all the means they possess, are continually on their guard against anything which might not only overthrow, but even shake, their authority.

Every Government at the present time has an army of officials united by railways, telegraphs, and telephones; it has fortresses and prisons, with all the newest improvements of photography and anthropometrical measurements; explosive mines, artillery, and rifles, and all the most perfected instruments of coercion in existence. And as soon as any new appliance appears, it is immediately adopted by Governments for their purpose of self-preservation.

They maintain organizations of spies, of bribed clergy, bribed scientists and artists, and a corrupted press. And above all, every Government has at its disposal a mass of officers perverted by patriotism, money, and hypnotism, and millions of physically strong and morally undeveloped twenty-one-year-old children called soldiers; or a conglomeration of hirelings stupefied by discipline and ready for any crime their commanders may direct them to commit.

Therefore it is impossible at the present time to abolish by force a Government which possesses such resources and is continually on its guard. No Government will ever permit it. And as long as Governments exist they will maintain taxation and private ownership of land and capital, because great landowners and capitalists, and officials paid from the taxes, form the Governments.

Every attempt of the working-men to take possession of the land belonging to private owners will certainly end as it has always ended, by soldiers coming and punishing and dispersing those who are endeavoring to get the land. Every attempt to avoid paying taxes will also end in the same way — soldiers will come, will seize what is required to meet the taxes, and severely chastise those who refuse what is demanded. This will also happen to those who will attempt — I do not say to seize the instruments of production and the factories — but even to merely sustain a strike or prevent other workmen from lowering the price of labor; soldiers will come and disperse the offenders, as is always occurring in Europe and Russia.

While soldiers are in the hands of Governments which exist by taxation, and are bound by the owners of land and capital, no revolution is possible. Therefore, so long as Governments have the armies at their command, the system of society will always be in accordance with the wishes of those who have that command.

V

THE question therefore naturally presents itself — who are these soldiers?

They are the very men who have been robbed of their land, and from whom taxes are extorted, and who are wage slaves to the capitalists.

Why then do these soldiers go against themselves? They cannot do otherwise, because, by a long course of training, so-called “religious” education and hypnotism,

they have been reduced to a state in which they can no longer reason, but only obey.

The Governments, having in their hands the money extorted from the people, bribe with this money various kinds of officials to enlist soldiers, and then hire military commanders to train them (*i.e.*, to deprive these men of their human consciousness), but above all it bribes with this money schoolmasters and clergy, who in various ways instil into children and adults the idea that soldiering — *i.e.*, preparation for murder — is not only an occupation useful to mankind, but a righteous and godly one.

And year after year, although these men see that they and their like contribute to the enslaving of the people by the wealthy and governing classes, they submissively continue to become soldiers, and having done so, uncomplainingly fulfil all that is demanded of them, be it not only the evident ill-treatment of their fellows, but even the murder of their parents.

Bribed officials, military teachers, and the clergy prepare soldiers by stupefying them. Soldiers, at the command of their superiors, and with threats of imprisonment and death, despoil the land of its wealth by means of taxes, and appropriate the profits of factories and commerce in the interests of the ruling classes. In their turn these ruling classes spend part of this money in bribing the officials, military teachers, and clergy, — and so the circle is complete, and no escape is possible.

VI

THE solution proposed by revolutionists to meet force by force, is manifestly impossible. Governments who already possess a disciplined force will never permit the formation of a similarly disciplined opposing force. All such attempts during the last century show how futile they are.

Nor can the solution be found in the suggestion of certain Socialists: to organize a great economical power

which would be able to overcome the united forces of capitalism. The trades unions will never, with their few millions of money, be able to compete with the economic power of multi-millionaires always upheld by military force.

Equally impracticable is the proposal of other Socialists: that of gaining the majority in Parliaments. No majority in Parliament will be able to carry anything inimical to the Government so long as the Government has the troops at its command. If at any moment the decisions of a Parliament were to threaten the interests of the ruling classes, the Government would dissolve and disperse such a Parliament, as always has been and ever will be the case while the army is in the hands of the Government.

The dissemination of socialistic ideas among the troops will not effect anything. The hypnotism of the army is so cleverly devised that the most free-thinking and intelligent man, while he remains in the army, will always fulfil what is demanded of him.

Escape, therefore, is to be found neither in revolutions nor through Socialism.

If there be a way of escape it is one hitherto unrecognized, which nevertheless can alone undoubtedly abolish the whole complex, ingenious, and ancient governmental machinery for the enslavement of the people.

It consists in refusing to enter the military service while one has not yet become subjected to the stupefying and depraving influence of discipline. This solution is the only one, and at the same time it is the undeniable obligation of every individual. It is the only possible way out, because the existing violence is based on these three actions of Governments: on the spoliation of the people, on the distribution of the stolen money to those who organize the robbery, and on the recruiting of the people into the army.

No private individual can hinder the Government from robbing the people by means of recruited troops; nor can he hinder it from distributing the money collected from the people amongst those whose help is re-

quired for recruiting soldiers and stupefying them; but he can prevent people from becoming soldiers by refusing to be one himself, and by making clear to others the substance of the fraud by which they are persuaded to enter military service.

Not only *can* every separate individual do this, he is *bound* to do it, because enlistment into military service is the renunciation of all religion, whichsoever a man may have professed (all religions forbid murder), — it is the renunciation of human dignity, and the voluntary submission to a slavery for the one purpose of murder. In this lies the only possible, absolutely necessary and inevitable escape from the slavery in which the ruling classes hold the working people.

The way of escape is neither in destroying force by force, nor in taking possession of the instruments of production, nor in Parliamentary opposition to Governments, but in every man himself, personally, becoming conscious of the truth, professing it, and acting in accordance with it. As to the truth that man must not kill his fellow-man, this is so well recognized that every one is aware of it.

If only men would apply their energies, not to external results, but to that which causes these results, — to their own life, — then the power of violence and evil which at present holds and afflicts humanity would melt like wax before a fire.

RECENT PRIVATE AND OTHER LETTERS

ON THE RELIGIOUS RELATION TO LIFE

(February 2, 1902)

DEAR N . . ., — I quite agree with what you write. I have been approaching this conviction gradually, and have now definitely reached it, as I have expressed in my article "What is Religion and what is its Essence?"

I disagree with you only in one but very important point: It is true that, at the present time, and especially amongst us in Russia, the Church and State deceit present the chief obstacle to the establishment of or even the approach to the Christian life, but one cannot say that the strife with these deceits represents the chief business of a Christian. The business of a Christian, by the means of which he attains all his purposes, including the one which at present in Russia stands before him, is everywhere and always one: to increase one's fire and let it give light to men. But directing all one's attention, all one's efforts, to some one particular object, as for instance, the life of manual labor, propaganda, or, as in this case, strife with this or that deceit, is always a mistake, like that of a man who, during an inundation, instead of directing the water through the chief outlet or repairing the dike which resists the water, should construct dams in his own street, overlooking the fact that the water will come in from other directions.

When I received your letter I wished to write to you reminding you that in strife one should be as wise as serpents and as meek as doves; but this is not enough: one should not for a moment forget the essential gen-

eral aim, and not let oneself be carried away by efforts to attain one particular object. This does not mean that one should not fight against deceits (when one knows that they are the greatest one will do so involuntarily), but one should fight only when the struggle follows as a result of the general effort toward perfection.

Another comparison. One has to protect houses from the possibility of a fire being communicated to all. One can cut green branches and stick them into the earth between the houses. And this may appear to be effective for a day or two. One can also plant small trees, and when they take root and grow up, this will be effective permanently.

It is necessary that our activity should have roots. And these roots are in our submissiveness to the will of God, in our personal life being dedicated to perfecting oneself and increasing love.

My physical health continues to be bad, but spiritually I feel very well, and I can work and do work as well as I am able, more seriously in view of the approaching end.

TO THE SWEDISH GROUP OF SCIENTISTS, WRITERS, AND
ARTISTS, WHO HAD EXPRESSED THEIR REGRET THAT
THE NOBEL PRIZE WAS NOT GIVEN TO TOLSTOI

(February 2, 1902)

GENTLEMEN, — The fact that the Nobel Prize was not accorded to me was doubly pleasant: first, because it saved me from the painful necessity of dealing in some way with money, — generally regarded as very necessary and useful, but which I regard as the source of every kind of evil; and secondly, because it has afforded to people whom I respect the opportunity of expressing their sympathy with me, for which I thank you all from my heart.

TO A PERSONAL FRIEND

(December 15, 1901)

(This letter refers to a revolutionary pamphlet appealing to workmen to take up arms against the Government, secretly circulated in Russia in large numbers. — Eds.)

THE pamphlet about street disturbances is very pitiful. Besides being immoral it is impracticable and simply stupid. If I were the Government I should publish such pamphlets at the expense of the State and spread them in millions of copies. Nothing could more radically undermine or render impossible the confidence of the people in those who share the views expressed in this and similar publications.

The proposal of the pamphlet is immoral, because while a soldier has been brought by a whole series of hypnotic suggestions to the condition where he is obliged either to kill or to suffer martyrdom, and is besides so bewildered that he does not see the sin of what he is doing — the man who would obey the author of this pamphlet would be preparing for murder and committing it of his own free will, incited by nothing but the author's very doubtful assertions of the temporal advantages for himself and his brothers of his murderous action.

The proposal is impracticable, because it is inconceivable that unarmed, undisciplined men could ever disarm armed and disciplined men ; and if it were to happen anywhere, — the unlikely chances of which are nine hundred and ninety-nine to one, — then those who succeeded would immediately be crushed by regular military forces from other parts.

And it is stupid because if those people who wish to liberate themselves from murder and preparation for murder were to begin to prepare for murder themselves, they would give their foe the only legitimate excuse for using against them all kinds of violence, and even murder, and of excusing all those committed previously.

I do *not* think it is necessary to make a declaration that I am not in agreement with those who share the views of this pamphlet which advocates street disturbances. For nearly thirty years now I have been repeating from all sides one and the same thing—that the whole matter lies in the spiritual condition of men, that all violence is a sin, and that the violence of those who fight against violence is absolutely senseless. And therefore no sincere man will confound me with revolutionary coercionists; as to an insincere man being able to invent against me any calumny which may be needful to him, against this there is no means of safeguarding oneself; and besides, it is not necessary.

TO AN ITALIAN PRESS CORRESPONDENT

(*September 22, 1901*)

My reply to your first question, as to "What the Russian people think of the Franco-Russian alliance?" is this: The Russian people—the real people—have not the slightest idea of the existence of this alliance; but even if they knew about it, I am certain that as all nations are for them all the same, their common sense as well as their feeling of humanity would suggest to them that this exclusive alliance with one particular nation in preference to all others can have no other object than to drag them into enmity and perhaps war with other nations, and therefore that this alliance would be abhorrent to them in the highest degree.

To the question, "Does the Russian nation share the enthusiasm of the French?" I think I can answer not only that the Russian people do not share this enthusiasm (if indeed it really exists, of which I am doubtful), but if they knew all that is done and said in France about this alliance they would rather experience a feeling of suspicion and antipathy to the nation which without any rational reason suddenly begins to manifest toward them an unexpected and exclusive love.

Concerning the third question, "What is the significance of this alliance for civilization in general?" I think I am right in presuming that as this alliance can have no other object than war or threats of war against other nations, it cannot fail to be harmful. As to the significance of this alliance for the two nationalities concerned, it is clear that as in the past so also in the future it will be positive evil for both. The French Government, the Press, and all that portion of French Society which praises this alliance, have already been and will still further be drawn into concessions and compromises contrary to the traditions of a free and humane nation, in order to pretend or really to be in agreement with the intention and feelings of the most despotic, retrograde, and cruel Government of all Europe. And this has been and will be a great injury to France. Whereas for Russia this alliance has already had and will still have, if it continues, a yet more pernicious influence. Since the establishment of this ill-fated alliance, the Russian Government, which once was afraid of European opinion and took it into consideration, at present no longer troubles itself about it, being conscious of the support of this strange friendship on the part of the nation which is regarded as the most civilized in the world, and it is daily becoming more and more reactionary, despotic, and cruel. So that this strange and unfortunate alliance cannot in my opinion have any other than the most negative influence on the welfare of both nations as well as on civilization in general.

TO A SWISS PASTOR

(August 26, 1901)

DEAR SIR,—I received your letter, and thank you for the feelings which you express in it. I am also very thankful to you for the extracts from A. Sabatier. I regret very much that I am acquainted only by name with this remarkable man. The extracts you quote

concerning his understanding of Christianity prove to me that I ought to be in complete unity of thought and feeling with him, as well as with you and all who share your views.

There is, however, one point in which I do not agree with you, namely, your idea as to the necessity of a Church, and, therefore, of ministers. That is, of persons invested with a certain authority. I cannot forget the 8th and 9th verses of the 23d chapter of Matthew, not because these verses are from the Gospel, but because it is for me a perfectly evident truth that there cannot be any ministers, teachers, and guides, amongst Christians, and that it is precisely this transgression of the Gospel law which has hitherto almost completely nullified the meaning of the true Christian teaching.

To my mind the chief meaning of the Christian teaching is the establishment of direct communion between God and man. Every man who takes upon himself the rôle of intercessor in this communion hinders those he wishes to guide from entering into direct communion with God, and, which is still worse, he himself completely loses the possibility of living in a Christian way. I think it is the height of pride, a sin which more than anything else estranges one from God—to say to oneself “I am capable of helping others to live well, and of saving their souls.” All that a man can do who wishes to follow the Christian teaching is to endeavor to perfect himself to the full measure of his strength, to use in this work of self-perfection all his powers, all his energy. This is the only method of influencing one’s neighbors and of helping them on the way of righteousness.

If a Church does exist it is given to no one to know its limits, and no one can know whether he belongs to it or not. The most that a man can desire or hope is to strive to become a part of it (this Church), but no one can be certain that he has indeed become a part, and even less can he imagine that he has the possibility and the right of guiding others.

I beg you to excuse the blunt way in which I have

expressed my opinion contrary to yours, and to believe in the feelings of sympathy and respect with which I remain at your service.

TO A RUSSIAN PRIEST

(*August 15, 1901*)

DEAR BROTHER T . . ., — Your letter afforded me great pleasure. You are the fourth priest in whom I meet a complete sympathy, not with my views, but with the essence of the teaching of Jesus, the true meaning of which is accessible to children and cannot call forth differences. And this is very joyful.

One thing in your letter gave me a little anxiety. It is your allusion to metaphysics and the Church. I am afraid you have yourself built up some system of metaphysics, or that you adhere to the Church metaphysics, which affords you the possibility of remaining a priest though holding your views. Judging by the fact that you have been in orders for ten years I conclude that you are yet a young man, and might be my son if not grandson; and, therefore, I will allow myself to give you unsolicited advice as to how, in my opinion, a priest ought to act who has freed himself from superstition, and understood the teaching of Jesus in its true meaning, and wishes to follow it.

When men find themselves in a position incompatible with the teaching of Jesus (as a soldier, or a priest, for instance), they construct or accept some complicated, confused system of metaphysics which is intended to justify that position. It is from this snare that I wish to warn you. For a Christian there can be no such complicated metaphysics. All that one can call metaphysics in the Christian teaching consists of the simple, universally comprehensible proposition that "All men are the sons of God — Brothers; and therefore should love both their Father and their brothers, and accordingly behave with others as they would wish others to behave with them." I think that all further metaphysics are from the Evil One, and are invented only

to reconcile the incompatible position we are in with the Christian teaching. There are also priests (I know such) who, feeling the incompatibility of their position with the pure understanding of the Christian teaching, try to justify themselves by the consideration that in their position they can better struggle with superstition and spread the Christian truth. I think such an assertion is even more false. In a religious cause the end cannot justify the means, were it only for this reason — that means which diverge from the truth destroy all possibility of attaining an end which consists of the teaching of truth. But above all, no man is called to teach others (Matt. xxiii. 8-9), but only to strive to make himself perfect in truth and love. And only by such striving (without any thought of influencing others) can man influence others.

Pardon me that I contravene statements you have not said and perhaps do not think, but having received a strong and joyful impression from your letter I wished to express all that I think about the tragic position of a priest who has learnt the truth, and of the way out of this position, and of its dangers.

The best solution of this position, an heroic way, is, I think, that the priest having called together his parishioners should come out to them on to the rostrum, and instead of conducting the service and bowing to the *ikons*, should bow down to the ground to the people, begging them to pardon him for having led them into error.

The next solution is that which was chosen ten years ago by a remarkable man, now dead, a priest from the College of Viatka, whom I knew, and who served in the diocese of —. He declared to his Bishop that owing to a change of views he could not continue to be a priest. He was called to Stavropol, and the authorities and his family so tormented him that he consented to resume his priestly office. But in less than a year he could no longer bear it, and again refused, and gave up his orders. His wife abandoned him. All these sufferings so exhausted him that he

died, like a saint, without betraying his convictions, and above all without losing love.

This is the second solution. But I know how terribly difficult it is owing to the family relations and to the circumstances of priests, and therefore I quite understand and do not at all condemn a priest who might remain in this position, notwithstanding that he no longer believes in his work. The only thing I have to say, and which I allow myself to advise (I advise the same thing to those Christians from whom military service is demanded), is that I should not use my reason to invent devices which make it appear that whilst doing what is wrong I am doing well.

If man only keeps the truth before his eyes in all its purity, is not untruthful to himself, then he will find a way to act in the best manner according to his strength. A priest who understands the true Christian teaching, should, I think, like every other Christian, firstly, strive to know the truth in its purity and completeness, independently of his position; and, secondly, to reform his position in the direction of the truth he has seen, according to his strength. (This approach is made of itself if the man is sincere.) As to how far a man will approach (for a priest this is especially difficult, his position being not only distant from, but contrary, hostile to, the truth), to what extent, and how he will approach—this is a matter between himself and God, concerning which outsiders cannot judge.

I greet you fraternally, — Yours, with love.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE MANCHESTER TOLSTOÏ
SOCIETY

(*August 15, 1901*)

DEAR FRIEND, — You were right in guessing that I should be interested in the Tolstoï Society. So I was. But I am sorry that I have enough vanity left to be interested. I have always held the opinion — and it

cannot change — that to be a member of the old Society started by God at the beginning of conscious humanity is more profitable for oneself and for mankind than to be a member of the limited Societies which we organize for the sake of attaining the ends we are able to conceive. I think the preference we give to our own Societies is due to the fact that the part we play in them seems to us of much greater importance than the one we play in God's Great Society. But this is an illusion only : all the three modes of activity which you mention in your letter will be more surely attained by a man who regards himself as a member of God's Great Society than by a member of Tolstor's Society. Such a man who is earnest, as I know you are, will, firstly, spread as much as he can the ideas that gave him peace of Conscience and energy in life without minding whether they are Tolstor's or anybody else's.

He will, secondly, try with all his might to induce people to speak their mind on the most important questions of life.

He will, thirdly, try to give every person with whom he comes in contact as much joy and happiness as it is in his power to do, and will also help those who get into difficulties through strictly following the teaching of Christ.

A man belonging to God's Great Society will also perform many other useful Christian acts which have neither been foreseen nor formulated by Tolstor's or any other Society.

I own there are some advantages in the union of persons of the same mind who form societies ; but the drawbacks of such organizations are much greater than their advantages, I think. And so I think that for myself it would be a great loss to change my membership of God's Great Society for the most seemingly useful participation in any human Society.

I am very sorry, dear friend, to differ from your opinion, but I cannot think otherwise.¹

¹ This letter was written in English. — Eds.

TO A . . . M . . . ON THE SAME SUBJECT

(October 5, 1901)

I HAVE received the letters,¹ and have, of course, read them with great interest. . . . Please transmit to them that not only have I nothing against the existence and the name of a Tolstoï Society, — the lower part of my being feels pleasure at the idea that my writings will be the subject of the attention of religious people and will be better understood; but that which is highest in me opposes this thought, and as I myself desire to be free from all bonds and all exclusiveness in order that nothing should distract me from direct immediate communion with God, so also I should desire the same for my friends near to me in spirit. Tell them that what I wrote to them I wrote guided by love, and that I was glad to see from their letters that they are aware of the danger accompanying all exclusiveness, of which I had warned them.

AN EARLIER LETTER AND A DIARY ENTRY ON
"TOLSTOÏISM"

To speak of "Tolstoïism," to seek guidance, to inquire about my solution of questions, is a great and a gross error.

There has not been, nor is there, any "teaching" of mine. There exists only the one eternal universal teaching of the Truth, which, for me, for us, is especially clearly expressed in the Gospels. This teaching invites man to accept his sonship to God, and therefore his freedom or his subjection (call it as you like) — freedom from the influence of the world, and subjection to God, to His will; and as soon as man has understood this teaching he fully enters into direct communion with God and has no longer anything to ask of any one.

¹ Of the members of the Society. — TR.

It is like a man who has to descend a river which has overflowed and flooded the surrounding fields. While the man is not in the center of the stream but in its flooded parts, he himself has either to swim or to row, and here he may be guided by other swimmers. Here I could help to direct others while myself approaching the bed of the stream. But the moment we have entered the channel there is not, nor can there be, any guide. We are all borne down by the power of the current, all in one direction, and those who were behind may turn out in front.

If a man asks which way he should swim, it only proves that he has not yet reached the bed of the stream, and that the one whom he asks is a bad guide, since he has not been able to bring him to it, *i.e.*, to that position in which one cannot ask because it is senseless to ask. How can I ask whither one should advance, when the stream with irresistible power is carrying me along in a joyful direction?

Men who submit to a leader, who believe and obey him, are undoubtedly straying in the dark together with their leader.

* * * * *

The other day a girl came to me asking the question (so usual, so artificial), What must she do to be useful? Talking with her it became clear to me that the great evil from which millions suffer is not so much that they live in positive wickedness as that they do not live according to their own conscience. Instead of their own conscience people take some other person's conscience, higher than their own (Christ's most frequently), and being obviously without power to live according to this other conscience they conform neither to that nor to their own and so live without conscience. I advised this young lady to live not by my conscience, as she wished, but by her own. But she, poor girl, does not even know whether she has a conscience of any kind or not. This is a great evil, and it is most important that men should develop, make clear to themselves, their conscience, and then live

according to that conscience; and not, as all do, choose another person's conscience unattainable to themselves, and then live without conscience, and lie, lie, lie for the sake of appearing to live wholly in conformity with this other selected person's conscience.

I therefore truly prefer a man without principles, a pleasure-loving, unreasoning man, who resists discussion, to one who lives according to another one's conscience and is therefore without any conscience. The former may develop a conscience; the latter never, unless he return to the independence of the former.

TO A PERSIAN

(July 24, 1901)

I AM very thankful for the poem you have sent me. It is of the highest interest, and I think that the propagation of the idea it contains will be very useful not only to the people of your country but also to the inhabitants of all countries. I quite share the idea expressed by the writer — that in order to cure evil one should find its cause, and try to destroy THAT. He says that the cause of evil is egotism and ignorance. But I should like to add, however, to the word ignorance — “ignorance of true religion.” By true religion I mean a religion which is within the reach of all, founded upon reason common to all, and therefore obligatory on every one.

The principle of this religion is expressed in the Gospel by the words: “Do unto others as thou wouldst wish that others should do unto thee.” This is the law and the prophets. If this principle were recognized as the chief religious principle by all men, then egotism, which is the readiness to sacrifice one's neighbors' welfare to attain one's own ends, would disappear of itself. So that I recognize as the cause of evil in general, and of wars in particular, solely the IGNORANCE OF TRUE RELIGION.

Nor do I altogether agree with you with regard to the brotherhood you suppose possible between States and their rulers. I think that the State which is formed and maintained always by violence not only excludes brotherhood but is its direct contrary.

If men are brothers there can be neither emperor, nor minister, nor general, nor subject, nor soldier. Amongst brothers no one can have the right to command, nor the duty to obey. All must obey God — not men, whose orders are mostly contrary to the law of God.

According to my opinion wars will only cease when every individual has imbibed the religious principle of not doing to others that which he does not want them to do to him, to such an extent that no one will feel able to accept military service; because military service is nothing else than preparation for murder, the act most contrary of all to the principle of reciprocity; because every man prizes his life above everything, and, therefore, to desire to take it from him is to do to another what one least desires done to oneself.

I think that everywhere there are men who profess the true religion, like the Bâbists in Persia, and that notwithstanding the persecutions to which these men are everywhere and always exposed, their ideas will spread more and more, and triumph in the end over the barbarity and ferocity of Governments, and especially over the frauds which Governments try to maintain on their peoples. It will not be the Governments which will abolish war. On the contrary Governments will always endeavor to excite national hatreds in order to render necessary the armies which alone constitute their power and their reason for existence.

Wars can be abolished only by the individuals who suffer by them. They will be abolished only when true religion is so widely spread that the majority of men will be ready to suffer violence rather than commit it, and will render war absolutely impossible by refusing military service.

TO THE EDITOR OF A HINDOO PAPER

(July, 1901)

DEAR SIR, — I thank you for your interesting letter. I quite agree with you that your nation cannot accept the solution of the social problem which Europe offers it, and which in reality is not a solution.

A society or collection of men founded on force is not only in a primitive state, but also in a very dangerous position. The connection which unites such a society can at any time be sundered, and the greatest calamities overtake it. All European States are in this position.

The only solution of the social problem for rational beings gifted with the capacity of love consists in the abolition of force, and in the organization of a society founded on mutual respect and rational principles voluntarily accepted by all. Such a condition can be obtained only by the development of true religion. By this term I imply the fundamental principles of all religions, which are: First, the consciousness of the divine essence of the human soul; and, secondly, regard for its manifestation.

Your religion is very ancient, and very profound in its metaphysical definition of the relation of man to the spiritual All—to "Atman"; but I think it has been perverted in its moral, *i.e.*, practical, adaptation to life owing to the existence of caste. This practical adaptation to life was, as far as I know, established by the Jainists, Buddhists, and some other sects, such as Kabir Panchis, in which the fundamental rule is the sanctity of life and therefore the prohibition of taking the life of any living being, especially man.

All the evil which you experience, — starvation, and, more important still, the humiliation of your nation by factory life, will continue as long as your people consent to become soldiers. Parasites feed only upon unclean bodies. Your nation must conserve its moral purity,

and in the degree in which it will be pure from murder, or readiness for murder, in that degree will it be free from the *régime* from which it at present suffers. I quite agree with you that you ought to be thankful to the English for all they have done for you — for your welfare — and that you should assist them in all that leads to the civilization of your nation; but you should not help Englishmen in their “Government by Coercion,” and under no consideration participate in an organization founded on violence.

Therefore it seems to me that the duty of every educated Hindoo consists in the abolition of all the old superstitions which conceal from the masses the elements of true religion, *i.e.*, the consciousness of the divine essence of the human soul and regard for the life of every living being without exception, and in spreading these principles as much as possible.

I think that these principles are implied, if not actually contained, in your ancient and profound religion, and require only further development and liberation from the covering which conceals them. I think that only such a mode of action can relieve the Hindoos from those evils to which they are subjected, and will serve as the most effective means for attaining the aim toward which you are striving.

Pardon me for so frankly expressing my opinion, and believe me, — Yours truly.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BULGARIAN PAPER “FREE
THOUGHT,” CONCERNING THE FATE OF A YOUNG
MAN WHO HAD BEEN TORTURED IN THE PENAL
BATTALION FOR REFUSING MILITARY SERVICE ON
RELIGIOUS GROUNDS

(1901)

FROM your letter I can see that the Bulgarian Government is not only brutal and cruel, but also strikingly stupid. (I say the Government, because I am sure that were it not for the demands of the higher Government

the lower officials would not have dealt in so barbarously cruel a way with this youth, who should at least inspire sympathy and respect.) It is comprehensible that the Governments of large States such as France, Germany, and the most foul Government of my country, can and even must act cruelly with such men as Shopof, who by their life and actions indicate the way of moral progress along which humanity is advancing. They (*i.e.*, these Governments) have no other choice, being maintained by brute force (while moral progress consists in substituting for brute force the consciousness of the brotherhood of men); and, therefore, such Governments must repress all manifestations of true progress, as they do, from the instinct of self-preservation. But small nationalities and States, such as Bulgaria, Servia, Switzerland, and others, obviously can attain nothing by brute force. In the struggle by force they will always be crushed by States immeasurably more powerful — by Austria, Germany, England, and Russia.

The rôle of small nationalities does not consist in monkey-like imitations of the large States, addicting themselves to militarism and all the horrors and cruelties connected with it (as we see they do, be it only in this little case with Shopof), but, being free from the burden and brutality of war, in their advancing, according to their power, along the way of moral progress, and indicating this way to the great nations.

This is what Germany did — although not so much in the way of moral, as of esthetic and scientific progress — when she was divided into little duchies and had not yet tasted the poison of brute force which spiritually killed her. Thus Switzerland acts, by showing men an example and the possibility of a combination of freedom and good order.

How well it would be if your Bulgarian nation be-thought itself in time, and instead of raising an army, strengthening its discipline, and torturing men, merely that it should not remain behind its straying neighbors who imitate the big nations, and fighting them — if your good, industrious, capable nation were to use all

its strength to establish at home freedom and equality, thus serving as an example for others, instead of trying to do something it can't do—frighten its neighbors with its disciplined army. How well this would be!

Whereas such actions as the torture of Shopof not only cover with ignominy the Government which commits them, but also inspire a bad opinion of the society which tacitly submits to such dishonest things. Shopof is intentionally being tortured as a soldier, whereas he from the very beginning refused to be enlisted in the Army; and that not out of caprice or unwillingness to be useful to men, but because military service, having murder for its object, is not compatible with that Christian teaching professed both by the People and the Government of Bulgaria. And therefore the trial of Shopof as of a soldier who has violated discipline is a lie and a fraud, perpetrated by the Government and its slaves toward a helpless, honest man. Even placing oneself on the standpoint of this Government, which may fear that no one will serve in the Army if it leave unpunished Shopof's refusal, it is clear that all it can do, not only for the maintenance of justice, but also from the instinct of self-preservation, is to compel him to go through some social service not in opposition to his faith.

ON REASON, FAITH, AND PRAYER

(January, 1901)

I. — REASON

You ask me what my Christian creed is. You have read my "Short Exposition of the Gospels," and you know, therefore, how I understand the teaching of Jesus.

If, however, you wish to know what I consider the essential meaning of the teaching: in my opinion the essential meaning, which I should like to transmit to all

mankind, and in which I wish all children could be educated, consists in this, that *man has come into the world not by his own will but by the will of Him that sent him.* And that man should know what He who sent him into this world requires, reason has been bestowed on him, by the help of which, if he truly desire it, he can always know the will of God—he can always know what He who sent him into the world requires of him.

The Pharisees and Scribes of our time always say that one should not believe in reason, because it will deceive, but that one should believe them and they will not deceive. But what they say is untrue. If one believes in men, and, as the Gospels say, “in the traditions of men,” then we shall all crawl astray from each other like blind puppies, and hate each other, as we do now: the Christian Churchman hates the Mohammedan, the Mohammedan hates the Christian, and the Christians themselves hate each other; the (Greek) Orthodox hates the Catholic, the Old Believer¹ hates the Orthodox, and so on; but if we adhere to the voice of our reason, we shall all unite, because reason is one and the same for all, and reason alone unites men and does not hinder the manifestation of the mutual love natural to them.

Reason unites us, not only with our contemporaries, but with men who lived two thousand years before us, and with those who will live after us. Thus we profit by all that has been produced by the reason of Isaiah, and Jesus, and Buddha, and Socrates, and Confucius, and of all the men who lived before us and believed in reason and served it. “Act toward others as thou wouldst wish them to act toward thee; do not revenge thyself against those who do evil unto thee, but return good for evil; be abstinent, chaste; not only refrain from killing people, but be not angry against them; keep peace with all,” and much else. All this is the product of reason, and all this has been preached equally

¹ An ancient Russian sect. — Tr.

by Buddhists, Confucianists, Christians, Taoists, and the Greek and the Egyptian sages. It is also preached by all good people of our time, and all agree with it.

And, therefore, I repeat, the chief meaning of the Christian teaching consists, in my opinion, in what is expressed in the Gospels, in the parable of the Workmen in the Vineyard, for whose use a garden had been given under condition of a payment to the owner, but who imagined it their own; and in the parable of the Talents, where the meaning is that men must fulfil the will of Him who sent them into life, which will consists in men becoming perfect, "as their Heavenly Father," as it is said in another place; *i.e.*, in approaching as near as they can to supreme perfection.

That the will of God consists only in this is also demonstrated to us by reason, and so clearly that there can be no dissension nor doubt. Every man who has thought of it cannot but see that in all the undertakings of life man does and will meet obstacles, and that only in this work (perfection) need man meet no obstacle; that is, in perfecting himself, clearing his soul from evil, and doing good to all that lives. Neither is this work arrested, destroyed, nor hindered by death, which stops, destroys, and renders meaningless all other worldly undertakings. Death neither arrests nor destroys this work, because the man who fulfils the will of Him who sent him, knowing that what he does is necessary to the Master, peacefully performs it here as long as he has the power, and knows that death destroys neither himself nor his relation to the Master, but that "there" also, although in quite different form, he will be in the same dependence on the Master, and have the same joy of a continually growing participation in the life and the work of the Master, *i.e.*, God.

It is thus I understand the teaching of Jesus; thus would I wish it to be understood by all; and in this I wish all children could be educated. Not to blindly believe the things told them about God and life; and to believe the things they do believe, not because they are told they are the utterances of prophets, or Christ, but

because their reason tells them they are true. Reason is older and more reliable than all the writings and all the traditions. It existed even when there were no traditions and no writings, and it is given to each of us direct from God.

The Gospel statement that all sins shall be pardoned except the sin against the Holy Ghost, in my opinion refers directly to the assertion that one should not believe in reason. Indeed, if we do not believe in the reason given us from God, in what shall we believe? Are we to believe those very men who wish to compel us to accept what is inconsistent with the reason given us by God?

II.—FAITH

You ask, what will give a weak, degenerated, depraved man (as we all are), amidst the snares surrounding him on all sides—what will give such a man the power to live a Christian life?

Instead of answering, and before answering, this question, I will ask you, What does it really mean?

We have become so accustomed to the question that it appears quite natural and intelligible, whereas it is not only not natural and not intelligible, but exceedingly strange and curious for every rational man not educated in the superstitions of the Church faith.

Why doesn't the smith hammering iron, or the peasant plowing the field, ask where he will obtain the strength to do the work he has undertaken, but instead does it to the best of his strength, makes mistakes, tries to correct them, becomes tired, halts, leaves his work for a time, rests, and again betakes himself to it? Is not every servant of God in the same position, when trying to live the Christian life, to fulfil the will of God he has become conscious of? Just in the same way such a man, if he be sincere, will live a Christian life to the best of his strength—obey the will of God, and if he makes mistakes will correct himself, will become tired, and rest, and again betake himself to the

same life-work — that of approaching to the best of his strength that perfection of the Heavenly Father indicated to him.

The question as to where one should get the strength for the Christian life only shows that some one has persuaded men that certain means exist, by whose aid men, without their own incessant efforts, strife, without falls, repentance, upheavals, again falls, and again upheavals, can obtain the necessary strength for a good, saintly life. It is this very superstition, that man does not approach perfection by his own slow efforts, but can purify himself all at once and become a saint, which is one of the most terrible and pernicious errors, — and it is this which is strenuously preached by all the Churches. Some assure their disciples that through the sacraments of baptism, confession, communion, man is freed from sin; others affirm that one is freed from sin by faith in the redemption, because the Christ-God has purified us with his blood. Both the one and the other teach that besides this we are purified by petitionary prayer to God that He should pardon our sins and make us good — and not that we should ourselves strive to become better.

This superstition is very pernicious because it contains a deceit.

The deceit consists, firstly, in the supposition that man can become quite pure and saintly; whereas for a living man this is impossible. Man cannot be perfect and sinless; he can only more or less *approach* perfection, regarding this approach as the sole meaning of his life. I even think that life after death will again consist only in advance toward perfection, although in a completely different form. In this personal effort toward perfection lies the whole meaning and joy of life. And therefore if perfection were attainable by external means we should be deprived of the very essence of life.

A deceit, secondly, because through it man's efforts are withdrawn from the thing he has to do — from improving himself — and are directed toward something unnecessary. To rely on sacraments, or belief in

the redemption, or prayer, contributing to the perfecting of oneself, is like a smith, while holding in his hands the iron and the hammer, and possessing an anvil and a well-lighted fire, trying to devise some other means of forging the iron besides striking it with a hammer, or praying to God to give him the strength to do the work.

One might pray to God, and devise other means for perfecting oneself, in the event of obstacles being put before us in this work and if we ourselves had not the strength for it. But in this work of perfecting oneself, or the Christian life, or the fulfilment of the will of God, God does not demand of us something we cannot do, — on the contrary He has taken care to give us all we are in need of for fulfilling His will.

We are here in this world as in a wayside inn in which the master has arranged everything really needful to us travelers, and has gone away himself leaving instructions how we should behave in this temporary shelter. All that we require is within our reach! Then what other means should we devise, and for what should we pray? We have only *to obey our instructions!* So also in our spiritual life: all that we require is given us, and the rest is in our own hands.

It is clear that if we wish to become saints all of a sudden, or to feel ourselves justified, and desire besides this to be rich — if we desire that our friends and ourselves shall not be subject to disease or to death, and that we shall always have good harvests, and that our foes shall be destroyed — then we, too, must ask all this of God as it is done in our churches.

But God has not destined us to anything of this kind. He not only has not ordained us to be perfectly righteous and sinless, but on the contrary He has given us a life the meaning of which consists only in our liberating ourselves from our sins, and so *approaching* toward Him. And He has not destined us to be rich, diseaseless, and deathless, but has given us trials, in the form of poverty, disease, the death of our friends and of ourselves — for the very purpose of teaching us to center our lives not in wealth, health, and this temporary exist-

ence, but in serving Him. And He has given us foes not in order that we should desire their ruin, but that we should learn to overcome them by love. He has given us a law of such a nature that it is always well with us if we fulfil it.

So that we have no need to invent any special means of salvation, nor to ask God for anything. All that we require is given us, if only we follow the instructions both of our conscience, and of God as expressed in the Gospels.

The third deceit, an especially pernicious one, consists in this, that the people who have come to believe that they cannot fulfil the will of God and live well by their own efforts, cease to labor at self-improvement; and not only this, but they lose the possibility of self-perfection. A man need only persuade himself that he cannot do something he has to do, and his hands become helpless, and he will indeed be unable to do what is necessary. A man need only become persuaded that he is ill, and he will be ill. Hysterical subjects feel impelled to scream because they believe they are forced to scream. Habitual drunkards do not recover, because they are persuaded they cannot abstain. There is no more immoral and pernicious teaching than that man cannot perfect himself by his own efforts.

This argument, that for a good Christian life one's own efforts are insufficient, and that some kind of external power is necessary, is like the assertion that reason is not sufficient to obtain knowledge of the truth, but that external indubitable proofs are necessary, which I mentioned in my first letter. In the former case, it is supposed beforehand that something or other exists which will give man the power to live a Christian life and to fulfil the will of God. In the latter case, it is supposed that something exists by which a man can ascertain positively that that which he is told is the absolute truth. It is supposed that some kind of means exists for ascertaining truth, independently of one's personal exertions of reason, and that, complete and absolute truth. But this is as impossible as it is to see the

light without eyes. Truth is ascertained by effort, and cannot be ascertained by any other means. And truth ascertained by man's reason can never be perfect, but only more or less approximate to absolute truth. So that "truth" may be the highest truth accessible to man at a given time, but it can never be absolute and positive truth for all times. No proposition can be an absolute truth for all time, were it only for this, that the life of all mankind, as well as that of individual man, is engaged in, and even consists of, the attainment of more and more perfect truth.

The erroneous and absurd idea that human reason cannot by its own efforts *approach* the Truth, proceeds from the same kind of terrible superstition as the one which asserts that man cannot approach the fulfilment of the will of God without external help. The essence of this superstition consists in the supposition that the complete, perfect truth has presumably been revealed by God Himself: to the Jews it was revealed on Mount Sinai, and then by various prophets; to Christians—by Christ, the Apostles, the Councils, the Church; to the Brahmans, in the Vedas; to the Buddhists, in the Tripitaka; to the Mohammedans, in the Koran.

This superstition is evil, firstly, because it distorts the very idea of truth; secondly, because once one has admitted as positive truth all the absurdities and horrors which are accepted as the revelation of God in the Scriptures, one has to keep on distorting common sense more and more in order to justify all these horrors and absurdities; and thirdly, because having accepted an infallible, external revelation as the source of truth, man ceases to believe in the only means to the knowledge of truth—the exertions of his reason. The man who acts thus is like one who, in search of a road, shuts his eyes and surrenders to the guidance of the first stranger who offers to show him the way, instead of exerting himself to the utmost to find it.

It is said, "How can one believe in reason when we see that people who are guided by it fall into error? Protestants, guided by reason, split up into numberless

faiths, and even one and the same man, trusting himself to reason, passes from one teaching to another. Therefore," it is said, "reason may be mistaken, and one cannot trust it."

But why so? When man believed in one Something, and his reason pointed out nothing more true, he was conscious of the highest truth accessible to him, and was right. Then he became conscious of a higher truth, and was right in acknowledging it. So also was he right when he became conscious of a yet higher and purer truth. The highest, clearest, truest, which man can see and contemplate, that is for him the Truth.

It may be well and desirable, very possibly, that all men should suddenly recognize one and the same Perfect Truth (although if this were so life would cease), but even were we to admit that this might be desirable, — things do not occur as we would like. It might be very desirable (to unreasonable people) that man should not suffer sicknesses, or that some means should exist which should cure him from all diseases; or that all men should speak the same tongue. But this will not take place merely because we imagine that all men can be cured by our remedy, or that all men can speak and understand Russian. If we do imagine this we only make things worse for ourselves, just as we only make it worse for ourselves when we imagine that the complete and eternal Truth is revealed to us in the Scriptures, in tradition, or in the Church.

This might have been imagined at the beginning of Christianity, when one faith appeared possible; but in our time, when by our sides we can see people of the most various religions all imagining that the complete and eternal Truth is revealed to them and not to us — to imagine that precisely we, who have been born in our faith, possess the complete Truth, as the Buddhists, Mohammedans, Catholics, Taoists, and others imagine — is especially foolish.

So mistaken an idea is especially harmful, because it disunites men more than anything else. Men ought to go on uniting closer and closer, as Jesus teaches, and as

our reason and heart indicate. But dogmas about "revelations" *disunite* men more and more.

Besides this, one should understand also that if man believes in revelation he believes so only because reason has told him that he should believe in such or such a revelation—the Mohammedan, Buddhist, or Christian. Whether we desire it or not, no truth can enter man's mind independently of his reason. Reason is like the sieves attached to the threshing machines, so that one cannot get the grain otherwise than through the sieve. It may be that chaff has passed and still passes through the sieve, but there is no other way of getting the grain. And if we imagine that we can have pure grain without sifting, then we deceive ourselves, and fill ourselves with chaff instead of bread, as Churchmen do.

So that we should not imagine everything is happening as we would like, but remember that everything follows laws established by God. And human life has been so ordained by God that men cannot grasp the whole truth, but are continually approaching it; and by comprehending it more and more clearly they are mutually more and more being drawn together.

You ask my opinion about the person of Jesus; whether I regard him as God; about his birth; about future life; about whom I understand by Scribes and Pharisees; and about the holy communion.

I regard Jesus as the same kind of man we all are, and I believe it to be the greatest sacrilege and an evident proof of heathenism, to regard him as God. To consider Jesus as God is to renounce God.

Jesus I regard as man, but his teaching I regard as Divine, in so far as it expresses Divine truths. I know no higher teaching. It has given me life, and I try as far as I can to follow it.

About the birth of Jesus I know nothing, nor do I need to know.

About future life we know that it does exist, that life does not end with death. As to what that life will be it is not given us to know, because it is not necessary to us.

By Pharisees I mean principally the priesthood. By Scribes I mean men of science who do not believe in God.

Concerning the eating of the body and the drinking of the blood, I think this passage in the Gospel the least important, and that it signifies either imbibing the teaching, or a commemoration, but that neither in the one case nor the other has it any importance; nor does it signify what the Church fanatics understand by it. I have expressed my understanding of this passage as well as I could in the "Short Exposition of the Gospels" (*Gospel in Brief*).

III. — PRAYER

IN my last letter I wrote about the futility of prayer, in respect both to the realization of our desires concerning events of the external world, and also to the inner world, for perfecting oneself.

I am afraid that owing to my own fault you will not understand me as I would wish, and I will add here, therefore, some thoughts on the subject of prayer.

One cannot pray for external events, such as that it might rain, or that an individual loved by me might remain alive, or that I should keep healthy and not die, for these events occur according to laws established by God once for all, and so established that if we act as we should they are always beneficial. It is just the same as if a good man has built a house with substantial walls and roof, which shelter me, and I capriciously desire to enlarge or alter the position of the walls, and ask for this.

As to one's inner perfection, one cannot pray for this, because everything necessary for it has been given us and it is neither possible nor needful to add anything more.

But because petitionary prayer has no meaning, it does not follow that one cannot or should not pray. On the contrary, I believe it is impossible to live well

without prayer, and that prayer is the necessary condition of a good, peaceful, and happy life. The Gospels indicate how one should pray, and what prayer should consist of.

In every man there is the divine spark, the Spirit of God. Every man is the son of God. Prayer consists in calling forth in oneself the divine element while renouncing all that is of this world, all which can distract one's feelings. (Mohammedans do very well when they shut their eyes and ears with their fingers on entering their mosques or beginning to pray.) The best method is the one Jesus teaches: to enter alone into one's chamber and lock the door; *i.e.*, to pray in complete solitude, whether in a room, a wood, or a field. •

Prayer consists in renouncing all that is of this world, external, and evoking in oneself the divine part of one's soul by throwing oneself into it, entering by it communion with Him of whom It is a part; recognizing oneself as the slave of God; and testing oneself, one's actions, one's desires, according to the demands not of the external circumstances of the world but of this divine part of one's soul.

And such prayer is not an idle sentimentality and excitement, such as is produced by public prayer with its accompaniments of singing, images, illuminations, and exhortations — but is always a help to life, reforming and directing it.

Such a prayer is a confession, a test of one's past actions, and an indication of the direction of one's future actions. Suppose I have been insulted and have an ill-feeling toward the man, and desire evil to him, or do not wish to do him the good I could; or else suppose I have lost my property, or a dear one; or am living and acting not in accordance with my faith. If I do not pray in the right way, but continue to live superficially, I shall not be delivered from the painful feeling of ill-will to the one who has insulted me. So also the loss of property or of the dear one will poison my life. And preparing to act contrary to the demands of my conscience, I shall

feel uneasy. But if I test myself before my soul and before God, all will change. I shall condemn *myself*, not my enemy, and shall search for an opportunity of doing good to him; my losses I shall accept as a trial, and try to bear submissively. And thus I shall find consolation, and shall see my way clearer for my actions; shall not, as before, conceal from myself the inconsistency between my life and my faith, but shall endeavor with repentance to bring them into harmony; and in this effort I shall find peace and joy.

But, you ask, in what should prayer consist? Jesus has given us a model prayer in "Our Father," and this prayer, reminding us of the essence of our life (which consists in being in accordance with the will of the Father and obeying it), and of our most usual sins: condemnation, or not forgiving one's brothers; and above all, of the dangers or snares of our lives — this remains until the present time the best prayer, and the most complete, of all which I know.

But besides this prayer, true solitary prayer also consists of all which in the words of other wise and righteous men, or in one's own, brings the soul back to the consciousness of its divine source, to a more vivid and clear expression of the demands of one's conscience, *i.e.*, of one's divine nature. Prayer is a test of one's present and past actions according to the highest demands of the soul.

So that I not only do not reject solitary prayer, which reestablishes the divinity of the soul, but I regard it on the contrary as a necessary condition of spiritual (true) life. I reject petitionary prayer and public prayer with its singing, images, candles, and even theatricalities, as sacrilegious. I often wonder how this public and petitionary prayer can exist among men calling themselves Christians, when Jesus clearly and definitely said that one should pray in solitude, and that you should not ask for anything, because before you open your mouth "Your Father in heaven knoweth what ye need."

As to myself I will say — without at all thinking that this is good for all, and that all ought to do so — that I have long ago contracted the habit of praying in solitude every morning, and that this my daily prayer is as follows:—

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. And after this I add, from the Gospel of John: Thy name is love, God is love. He who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. No man hath seen God anywhere, but if we love one another then He abides in us, and His love is fulfilled in us. If any man say "I love God" but hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he sees, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? Brothers, let us love one another; love is from God, and every man that loveth is from God and knoweth God, because God is love.

Thy Kingdom Come. And I add: Seek ye the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all the rest will be added unto you. The Kingdom of God is within you.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. And here I ask myself whether I really believe that I am in God and God in me? And do I believe that my life consists in increasing love in myself? I ask, do I remember that to-day I am alive, and to-morrow dead? Is it true that I do not wish to live for personal desires and human glory, but only for the fulfilment of the will of God? And I add the words of Jesus from the three Gospels: Not my will, but Thine; and not what I desire but what Thou desirest. And not as I desire but as Thou desirest.

Give us this day our daily bread. I add: My food consists in doing the will of Him that sent me, and completing it. Deny thyself, take up thy cross for each day, and follow me. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and humble in heart, and you will find peace for your soul. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin

against us. I add: And your Father will not forgive you your sins unless each one of you forgive his brother who has sinned against him.

And lead us not into temptation. I add: Beware of the temptations of the flesh, of ambition, of ill-will, of gluttony, adultery, human glory. Do not give your alms before men, but so that your right hand does not know what your left is doing. And he is not meet for the kingdom of God who having taken the plow looks back. Rejoice when thou art abused and humiliated.

But deliver us from evil. I add: Beware of what issues from the heart: evil thoughts, murders (every ill-will toward men), thefts (profiting by what one has not earned), adultery (even in thought), false witness, slander.

I conclude the prayer again with the words of the Gospel of John: "And we know that we have passed from death into life if we love our brother. He that loveth not his brother has not eternal life abiding in him."

So do I daily pray, adapting the words of this prayer to my actions and my spiritual state.

But besides this prayer I pray when I am alone with myself. I read the thoughts of wise and righteous men, not only Christian and not only ancient; and reflect, searching out before God the evil in my heart, and trying to extract it. I also endeavor to pray during the daily round of my life when I am with men, and passions are getting hold of me. It is in these cases I try to recall to mind all that took place in my soul during my solitary prayer; and the more sincere that prayer was, the easier it is to refrain from evil.

This is all I wished to tell you about prayer, in order that you should not think I reject it.

TO A MEMBER OF A RUSSIAN PROVINCIAL SCHOOL
BOARD*(June 20, 1900)*

WHEN I taught in schools I had not then elucidated my relation to the teaching of the Church, but not attributing importance to this I avoided speaking of it to the pupils and instead read to them the Bible narratives and the Gospels, directing their attention chiefly to the moral teaching, and always answering sincerely the questions put to me.

If I was asked about the miracles I said that I did not believe in them.

But at the present time, having suffered much in the search for truth and guidance in life, I have come to the conviction that our Church teaching is an unscrupulous and pernicious falsehood and that instructing children in it is the greatest of crimes.

To tell a child who comes to me, an old man, in its search for help and indication as to how it should understand its life, the Source of life, and its relation to this Source and to the Universe, — to tell this child that God created the world and Adam in six days six thousand years ago and then rested, and that Adam sinned, and that in order to mend matters it was necessary to send God's Son into the world so that he could be killed; to tell him all those terrible blasphemous assertions of the Church which definitely destroy in the child all possibility of a conception of God as the Spirit of Love and Source of Life and instil into him horrible ideas of vengeance, temptation, reward, punishment, of the impossibility of improving oneself by one's own efforts, and all the other Church falsehoods which seem to be purposely invented to deprave the child's pure mind and heart, — to say this to a child inquiring for the truth is a most terrible crime, worse than physical violation. Thus I now look upon the teaching of the Church doctrine.

But notwithstanding my complete conviction of this

I would even now refrain, if I were a teacher, from imparting this conviction to the children, out of respect for their liberty and that of their parents, who regard this falsehood as sacred truth. But although I would avoid direct allusion to this, as formerly, every time the children appealed to me with the question I would quite truthfully tell them all I think about it.

And this is what I do at present with grown-up people and children.

Truth is always sacred. And nowhere is the transgression of its sanctity so criminal as in education: "God should be served in spirit and in truth," "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

So all I can say in answer to your question is: Regard it as your sacred duty always to speak the truth when answering the religious questions of pupils, and yet avoid thrusting any religious views upon them.

And if you yourself have not yet arrived at clear answers to the questions try to work them out, at first for yourself and then for them. And if you don't know, then say you do not know.

And this reply will be not only more fruitful than one gathered from the Catechism, but the reply "I do not know" will be sacred because it is true; whereas a reply from the Catechism will be a crime because it is the production of the Father of Lies, according to the word of the Gospel.

ON THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG

(1900)

FROM the time, twenty years ago, when I first clearly perceived how happily mankind should and might live, and how senselessly they torment themselves and ruin generation after generation, I have kept removing further and further back the fundamental cause of this folly and ruin.

At first, fallacious economic organizations appeared

to be the cause; then State coercion, which upholds these organizations; whereas I have now come to the conviction that the fundamental cause of it all is the erroneous religious teaching transmitted by education.

We have become so accustomed to the religious lie that surrounds us that we do not notice all the atrocity, stupidity, and cruelty with which the theology of the Orthodox Church is permeated. *We* do not notice it, but children do, and their souls are irreparably maimed by this teaching. We have but clearly to understand what we are really doing, when we teach children this so-called religion, in order to be appalled by the dreadful crime thus perpetrated.

A pure, innocent, and as yet undeceived and undeceiving child comes to you, to one who has experience of life, and who possesses, or might possess, all the knowledge now accessible to mankind—and inquires about those fundamental truths by which man should be guided in life. And how do we answer him? Very often, indeed, we do not answer but anticipate his questions, so that he may be provided with an incited answer ready for the time when his question arises.

We answer his question with a coarse, incoherent, stupid, and, above all, cruel Jewish legend, which we repeat either in its original form or, worse still, in our own words. We tell him—assuring him that this is the sacred truth—something which, as we are well aware, is impossible, and has for us no meaning: that six thousand years ago some strange being, which we call God, bethought itself of creating a world, and created it and man; man sinned, and for this the cruel God punished him and all of us, and then redeemed us from Himself by the death of His Son, also God; and that our chief object is to propitiate this God and liberate ourselves from the sufferings to which He has condemned us.

We imagine that there is no harm in this, and even that it is useful to the child; and we listen with pleasure as he repeats all these horrors, and do not realize the dreadful distortion—imperceptible to us because it is

spiritual—that is thereby taking place in the child's soul. We think that the soul of a child is a clear board on which we may write all we choose.

But this is not the case. The child has a vague idea of that Source of all, that cause of his existence, that force in whose power he finds himself, and he possesses the elevated idea of this source—indefinite and inexpressible in words, but of which his whole being is conscious—natural to all rational men. And suddenly, instead of this, he is told that this source is naught else than some sort of personal, self-willed, and dreadful evil being—the Jewish God.

The child has a vague, but correct, idea of the object of this life, which he sees is happiness, to be attained by loving communion among men. Instead of this, he is told that the general object of life is the caprice of a whimsical God, and that the personal aim of each individual is the liberation of himself from eternal punishment—sufferings earned by some one, which God has laid upon all.

Every child also has the consciousness that the duties of man lie in the region of morality. Instead of this, he is told that his duties consist principally in blind faith, in prayers,—the uttering of certain words at certain hours,—and in swallowing a decoction of bread and wine meant to represent the flesh and blood of God; to say nothing of *ikons*, miracles, immoral Bible stories—given as examples of conduct—and the Gospel miracles, with all the immoral meaning that has been attached to the Gospel narrative. Just as though, from the cycle of folklore about various mythical heroes, some one were to construct a complete teaching of life, and were to present this to children as rational history.

It seems unimportant to us, and yet the teaching to children of this so-called religion which is taking place among us is the most dreadful crime we can possibly imagine. Torture, murder, the violation of children, are nothing in comparison with this crime.

The Government, the ruling classes, those in power, stand in need of this fraud; their power is inseparably

united with it; consequently the ruling classes always insist on this fraud being imposed upon children, and maintained in grown-up people by strenuous hypnotism. Whereas those who desire, not the maintenance of the present false social organization, but, on the contrary, its reform, and, above all, those who desire the welfare of the children with whom they come in contact, should endeavor with all their might to deliver children from this dreadful fraud.

Therefore the utter indifference of the young to religious questions, and the negation of all religious forms, even though not replaced by any positive religious instruction, is still incomparably better than the Judaico-ecclesiastical theology, be it in ever so perfected a form.

It appears to me that for any one who has once understood the significance of imparting false teaching as sacred truth there can be no question as to what he should do, even though he possess no positive religious convictions to transmit to the child. If I know that a deception is a deception, then under no possible circumstances may I tell a child, who guilelessly, trustfully questions me, that a deceit, evident to me, is the sacred truth. It would be better if I could answer truthfully all those questions that are so untruthfully answered by the Church. But, if I cannot do this, still I must avoid giving out as truth an evident lie, knowing indubitably that from adherence to truth nothing but good can result. Besides, it is not true that a man can be without anything to say to a child in the way of the positive religious truth professed by him. Every sincere man knows *that* good principle for which he lives. Let him communicate that to the child, or let him demonstrate it to him, and he will do good to the child, and will certainly not injure it.

I have written a book called "The Christian Teaching,"¹ in which I desired to express as simply and clearly as possible what it is I believe. The book has turned out to be unsuitable for children, though it was precisely

¹ To be had of THE FREE AGE PRESS, post free, 1½d.; 64 pp.

children I had in view when I wrote it. If I now had to transmit to a child the substance of the religious teaching I consider true, I should say to him : that we have come into this world and live in it, not according to our own will, but according to the will of that which we call God, and that it is well with us, therefore, only when we fulfil this will. This will is, that we should all be happy ; and for all to be happy there is but one means : each must act toward others as he would wish that they should act toward him.

As to the questions about how the world came into existence, and what awaits us after death, I would answer to the first by the acknowledgment of my ignorance, and of the anomaly of such a question (in the Buddhist world no such question exists); and to the second I would answer by the conjecture that the will of Him who called us into this life for our welfare leads us somewhere through death—probably for the same purpose.

TO A PRIVATE FRIEND, ON SUICIDE

(1898)

THE question, "Has a man in general the right to kill himself?" is incorrectly put. There can be no question of "right." If he is able to do it, then he has the right. I think that the possibility of killing oneself is a safety-valve. Having it, man has no right (here the expression "right" is appropriate) to say that life is unbearable. If it were impossible to live, then one would kill oneself ; and consequently one cannot speak of life as being unbearable. The possibility of killing himself has been given to man, and therefore he may (he has the right to) kill himself, and he continually uses this right—when he kills himself in duels, in war, by dissipation, wine, tobacco, opium, etc. The question can only be as to whether it is reasonable and moral (the reasonable and moral always coincide) to kill one-

self. No, it is unreasonable; as unreasonable as to cut off the shoots of a plant which one wishes to destroy: it will not die, but will merely grow irregularly.

Life is indestructible; it is beyond time and space, therefore death can only change its form, arrest its manifestation in this world. But having arrested it in this world, I, firstly, do not know whether its manifestation in another world will be more pleasant to me; and, secondly, I deprive myself of the possibility of experiencing and acquiring by my *ego* all that could be acquired in this world. Besides this, and above all, it is unreasonable because, by arresting my life owing to its apparent unpleasantness, I hereby show that I have a perverted idea of the object of my life, assuming that its object is my pleasure; whereas its object is, on the one hand, personal perfection, and, on the other, the service of that work which is being accomplished by the whole life of the Universe. It is for the same reason that suicide is also immoral. Life in its entirety, and the possibility of living until natural death, have been given to man only on the condition that he serve the life of the Universe. But, having profited by life so long as it was pleasant, he refuses to serve the Universe as soon as life becomes unpleasant; whereas, in all probability, his service commenced precisely when life began to appear unpleasant. All work appears at first unpleasant.

In the Optin Monastery, for more than thirty years, there lay on the floor a monk smitten with paralysis, who had the use of his left hand only. The doctors said that he was sure to suffer much, but not only did he refrain from complaining of his position, but incessantly making the sign of the cross, and looking at the *ikons*, he smilingly expressed his gratitude to God and joy in that spark of life which flickered in him. Tens of thousands of visitors came to see him; and it is difficult to imagine all the good which flowed into the world through this man, though deprived of the possibility of any activity. Certainly he did more good than thousands and thousands of healthy people who

imagine that in various institutions they are serving the world.

While there is life in man he can perfect himself, and serve the Universe. But he can serve the Universe only by perfecting himself, and perfect himself only by serving the Universe.

TO THE RUSSIAN MINISTERS OF THE INTERIOR AND OF
JUSTICE

(*April 20, 1896*)

DEAR SIR,—I address you as man to man, with feelings of respect and good-will, in which feelings I beg you also to accept my letter. Only with sincere feelings of this kind are mutual understanding and agreement possible. The matter about which I write concerns the persecutions endured at the hands of the officials of your Department by those persons who possess certain writings of mine which are prohibited in Russia, and lend them to others who desire to read them. As far as I know many different persons have been subjected to such persecutions. One of the last cases was that of a woman doctor of Tula, Miss N——, who was searched, put into prison, and is now being cross-examined by the Public Prosecutor, accused of spreading my writings.

This case of Miss N——, a woman no longer young, of weak health, exceedingly nervous, highly respected for her fine nature, and who has gained the universal love of all who know her, is especially striking. The occasion arose from the following circumstance: Miss N—— is well known to me and is a friend of my daughter. A workman in Tula had written to me several times asking for the loan of my book, "What I Believe." Not having a copy at my disposal and not knowing the man, I left several of his letters without answering. But having again received a letter from him this winter with the same request, I transmitted it to my daughter, asking her to send him the book he

desired if she had it. My daughter not having a copy, but remembering that in the same town (Tula) from which he wrote Miss N—— was living, who possessed some of my prohibited writings, she sent her card to the applicant, requesting that a copy of one of these books should be given to the bearer on presentation to Miss N——. This card, which was discovered, served as the occasion for the arrest of Miss N——, and of all the persecutions to which she was submitted.

I think that measures of this kind are unreasonable, useless, cruel, and above all unjust. They are unreasonable because there neither is nor can be any reason why Miss N—— was alone chosen as a victim out of those thousands of people who have my prohibited writings and lend them. They are useless because they do not attain any end; they do not succeed in checking anything, as the evil they are supposed to check continues amongst thousands of people, all of whom it is not possible to arrest and keep in prisons. They are cruel, because for many weak and nervous individuals, such as Miss N——, police raids, cross-examinations, and especially imprisonment may be the causes of severe nervous complaints (which was the case with Miss N——), and even of death. But, above all, these measures are in the highest degree unjust because they are not directed against the person from whom emanates the activity which the Government regards as evil.

In the present case I am this person. I write these books, and in personal intercourse spread those views which the Government regards as evil; and therefore if the Government desires to counteract the development of this evil, it should direct against me all the measures it now applies against those who casually come under its influence, and who are to blame only because they possess the prohibited books which interest them and lend them to their acquaintances. The Government should act thus for this reason also, that I not only do not conceal this activity of mine, but categorically, by this very letter, declare that I wrote and circulated

those books which the Government regards as pernicious, and still continue to write and circulate in books and letters and conversations similar ideas to those expressed in the books.

The essence of these ideas is, that the unmistakable law of God has been revealed to men, that this law stands higher than all the human laws, and that, in accordance with this law, we should not be in enmity with nor coerce each other, but, on the contrary, should help each other — should act with others as we would wish others to act with us.

These are the thoughts, with the practical inferences they imply, which I have expressed as well as I could in my books and am now endeavoring to express yet more clearly and simply in the book I am now writing. I express the same thoughts in conversations, and in the letters I write to people I know and to those I do not know. I express the same thoughts to you now also, indicating the acts of cruelty and violence contrary to the law of God which are perpetrated by officials of your Department.

The words uttered by Gamaliel regarding the dissemination of the Christian teaching: "If this work be of men, it will come to naught. But if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" — these words constitute a lesson of *true* governmental wisdom in its relations to the manifestations of spiritual activity of men. If this activity be false it will fall of itself, whereas if it contains the work of God — such as the work of God in our age, that is the substitution of the principle of rational love in the place of violence — then no external efforts can either hasten or retard its fulfilment. If the Government allows the unchecked dissemination of these views they will spread slowly and equably; if the Government, as it does now, subjects to persecution those who have accepted these thoughts and are transmitting them to others, then the dissemination will diminish among timid, weak, and hesitating people precisely to the degree in which it will augment among strong, energetic, and convinced people.

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And therefore the process of the dissemination of the work will not stop, and will be neither retarded nor hastened by any means the Government adopts.

This, in my opinion, is the general and immutable law of the spreading of truth, and therefore the wisest thing the Government can do in its relation to the expression of ideas it regards as undesirable, consists in undertaking nothing, and especially in not employing such unworthy, cruel, and obviously unjust measures as the torture of innocent people because they do things which have been done by tens of thousands of other men whom no one persecutes for this.

If, however, the Government wishes at all costs not to remain inactive, but to punish, threaten, and suppress that which it regards as evil, then the least irrational and the least unjust course it could take would be to direct all measures of punishment, intimidation, and suppression against that which the Government regards as the source of the evil, *i.e.*, against me; the more so as I declare beforehand that I will, unceasingly, until my death, continue to do that which the Government regards as evil, and which I regard as my sacred duty before God.

And please do not think that in asking you to direct against me the measures used against some of my acquaintances I imagine that their application to me would create any kind of difficulty to the Government—that my popularity or my social position protects me from police raids, cross-examinations, exile, imprisonment, and other severer acts of violence. I not only do not think so, but am persuaded that if the Government were to act vigorously with me, to exile me, imprison me, or apply a yet more extreme measure, this would not create any particular difficulty, and that public opinion would not only not be revolted, but the majority would completely approve of such action, and say that it should have been done long ago.

God is my witness that in writing this letter I am not surrendering to a desire for bravado, or to show off in some way, but am prompted by a moral demand, which

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consists in relieving innocent people of responsibility for actions committed by me ; and, above all, of indicating to the representatives of the Government, and to you in their number, the cruelty, unreasonableness, and injustice of the measures you use, and of asking you, as far as possible, to cease them, and to free yourself from the moral responsibility they involve.

I should be very glad if you were to answer me in a simple unofficial letter as to your thoughts about what I have expressed, and whether you will fulfil my request to transfer for the future all persecutions, if so it be they are regarded as necessary, to me, the principal person from the governmental point of view who deserves them.

With the feeling of true good-will, I remain, — Yours respectfully.







